THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM

IN

BLACKBURN

AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BY THE

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CORRECTIONS.

PAGE 44. A small society existed at Oakenshaw before 1820, which, after continuing for a few years, was given up, and resumed at the time named.

,, 44. For *Miss Hart* read Mr. Lawrence Fort.

,, 70. For *explusion*, read expulsion.

,, 71. For *crisises* read crises.

,, 72. For *keep* read keeps.

,, 76. Blackburn Trust: omit Messrs. Charnley and Ratcliffe.

PREFACE.

The Sketches contained in these pages were originally prepared with the intention of being given in the form of a public lecture. An opportunity of doing so not having occurred, it has been deemed advisable to place them on permanent record through the medium of the press. It is right to say, that the original style of address as a lecture has been retained, but the matter has been considerably enlarged. Such as these sketches are, it is hoped they will afford a measure of edification and profit to all who may read them over.

180, Montague Street, Blackburn, 1871.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS

OF

Wesleyan Methodism in Blackburn

AND THE CIRCUIT.

LANCASHIRE was early favoured with the labours of the zealous pioneers of Methodism. Before Mr. Wesley visited this county, a few devoted men, who had embraced views and principles similar to his own, had lifted up the Gospel standard, and blown the trumpet of alarm in some of its benighted towns and villages. Amongst these early labourers were David Taylor and John Bennet. David Taylor was originally butler to Lady Hastings, and ultimately became a minister of the Gospel in connection with Lady Huntington's Society. John Bennet was a man of education and means, who had been converted to God under the preaching of David Taylor. This John Bennet became a popular and powerful preacher, and proved the means of turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. During the course of his labours he formed a sphere of service which in that day was called a "Round." This Round embraced places in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire. After labouring for some time in this way, he became acquainted with Mr.

Wesley, who, at Bennet's request, was induced to visit these parts. In his Jonrnal, under date June, 1744, Mr. Wesley writes, "I accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire," and in the May following he says, "I preached in several places in Lancashire at John Bennet's request." Bennet identified himself for awhile with Mr. Wesley as one of his preachers, but soon afterwards quitted the Connexion, and became one of his bitterest opponents. He ultimately settled down as an Independent minister at Bolton, where he lived and died. It was this same John Bennet who married Grace Murray, the woman on whom John Wesley placed his affections, which circumstance occasioned him great disappointment and unspeakable grief of heart, and involved his brother Charles and others who were opposed to his marriage in much discredit.

About the time that Bennet and Taylor were pursuing their labours, John Nelson, the Yorkshire stonemason, made his way into Lancashire. Other well-known men soon followed in his steps, such as Grimshaw, Darney, Oddie, Hopper, Maskew, Mitchell, and others, who belonged to the early race of Methodist preachers.

The progress of Methodism in Lancashire at first was slow. It met with scorn and persecution from every quarter. Its adherents were few, and were generally found amongst the poorest of the poor. Christopher Hopper, one of the old Methodist preachers, says in his autobiography, when speaking about the scarcity of Methodists in Lancashire, "I had to ride sixteen miles before I met with a Methodist, and he was in a cellar at Rochdale; then I rode eleven more before I met with another, and he was in a garret in

Manchester." Even in 1770, the whole of Lancashire numbered only 2,243 members. The entire county was comprised within two circuits, namely, Lancashire, South, and Lancashire, North; the former containing 1,406 members, and the latter 737. This same Christopher Hopper, many years afterwards, when Methodism had prospered and become a powerful body, was preaching in Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, during the time of Conference, before a large congregation, when he took occasion to remind them of the smallness of their beginning as compared with their then prosperous state. Looking round upon the vast audience assembled, he said, "You have here what may be considered a noble edifice, and have now become a great people, but I recollect a period when you were few in number and very feeble. When I first made my entrance among you I preached in an old garret that overhung the river in the neighbourhood of the old bridge. The coals were in one corner of the room, and the looms in another, and I was in danger of breaking my neck in getting up to it. When the congregation was collected the first evening it did not consist of more than from twenty to thirty people." When we picture to ourselves this dingy little garret, with the coals in one corner and the looms in another, and compare it with the beautiful and spacious temples in which the Methodists of Manchester worship at the present day, we may well exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

While speaking of this old garret as the first place of worship in Manchester, we are reminded of the many strange and inconvenient places in which our Methodist forefathers had to conduct their devotions. Barns, hay lofts, blacksmiths'

shops, farm houses, kitchens, and the humble dwellings of the poor, these, as well as other queer and out-of-the-way places, formed the sanctuaries in which the first Methodists had to worship God. Necessity often obliged them to resort to ingenious plans to accommodate the congregations. In a place which we know very well, when Methodism was first commenced, the lower room of a labourer's cottage was used as a preaching place. In awhile this room became too small to accommodate the worshippers. Not being able to procure a larger building, they had recourse to the following plan :— A hole was cut in the ceiling sufficiently large for a man's head to go through, so that when the room became full the surplus congregation went into the upper chamber, the preacher occasionally favouring his hearers above and below with a sight of his face, whilst to both he dispensed the word of life.

Persecution assailed the early Methodist preachers in Lancashire as well as in other parts of the kingdom. The forms in which that persecution manifested itself were often fiendish and brutal, and occasionally it partook of the ludicrous. Thomas Mitchell, or, as Mr. Wesley used to call him, Tommy Mitchell, one of the first labourers in these parts, relates in his journal a somewhat amusing incident which occurred in his own experience, and not the least amusing part of the affair is the grave simplicity with which he narrates it. He says, "I continued some time in these parts, and then went to several places in Lancashire. In one place I met with a mob of women, who put me into a pool of water which took me nearly overhead ; but, by the blessing of God, I got out and walked about three miles in my wet clothes." Poor old

"Tommy" Mitchell! Warm indeed must have been the tempers of his somewhat unfeminine entertainers, but cold was the treatment which he received at their hands, as he no doubt felt it to be whilst floundering about in that muddy pond of water. Had we been spectators of the scene, whilst we might have condemned the conduct of those women, we should certainly have found it difficult to withold a smile as we gazed upon them bearing in their arms the dear old Methodist preacher, and then plunging him overhead in that cold water pond. He does not say in what part of Lancashire this event transpired, but we presume the Methodist ladies of Blackburn will not contend for that honour. Very different is the conduct of the Lancashire women of the present day, for better friends to religion, and more zealous and liberal supporters of its institutions, we have not met with in all our travels. "Tommy" Mitchell seemed more in danger of going to heaven by water than by fire, for he tells us that on another occasion, whilst prosecuting his labours, a number of men dragged him out of bed in his shirt, and took him to a deep pool and threw him in, and, after he had got out, they threw him in again, which they repeated three or four times. "After which," he says, "they put an old coat about me, took me a mile outside the town, and set me upon a hill, then they shouted three times, 'God save the King, and the devil take the preacher!'" Thomas Mitchell laboured as a travelling preacher in this neighbourhood in 1768 and 1769. He was a man of humble talents but earnest zeal, and persevering labours. And such were the men who laid the foundations of Methodism in this county; men of God, men who braved the fiercest storms of persecution, and who

counted not their lives dear unto themselves if only they could win souls to Christ and establish his kingdom upon the earth.

Whilst Mr. Wesley was labouring in other parts of the kingdom a number of his zealous helpers were working hard in this county, chiefly under the supervision of the Rev. William Grimshaw, incumbent of Haworth. Mr. Grimshaw was a most remarkable man. His whole soul was on fire with zeal for God and the salvation of souls. Although holding a living in the Church of England, yet he cheerfully joined Mr. Wesley in his great work of spreading scriptural holiness through the land. So closely did he identify himself with the movement that his name stood upon the minutes of the Conference for a few years as one of the early preachers. He was in labours more abundant. He travelled over wild uncultivated districts in the most inclement seasons, and often at the hazard of his life, in order to carry the gospel to the scattered inhabitants of Yorkshire and Lancashire. He used to preach thirty or forty times a week, besides conducting services in his own church at Haworth. He was greatly beloved and venerated by his parishioners, and it is said that for a long time after his death his name was seldom mentioned without weeping. He finished a life of extraordinary labours by dying a most triumphant death. When asked just before he died how he was, he said—"I am happy, as happy as I can be on earth, and as sure of heaven as if I was in it." At another time he said—"I have suffered all night what the blessed martyrs did; my flesh is, as it were, wasting in the fire, but I have nothing to do but to step out of this bed into heaven, and I have my foot on the threshold already." A

little village called Brindle, a short distance from Hoghton Tower, has the honour of being the birthplace of this devoted man, and Blackburn Grammar School was the place where in his boyhood he acquired his early education.

Another of the early labourers on the ground was a singular, but zealous and persevering man named Darney. William Darney was a tall, bony Scotchman, who commenced his ministry in 1742. In courage he was as bold as a lion, and spoke with a voice like thunder. Scotch Will was the name by which he was known among the common people. It was chiefly through his instrumentality that Grimshaw began his herculean labours. One day Darney made his way into the village of Haworth: amongst his hearers was the incumbent, who was struck with his bold and earnest preaching, and was induced to join him in the service by giving out the hymns and offering prayer, which led the people to exclaim—"Mad Grimshaw has turned Scotch Will's clerk!" Darney had a taste for writing poetry, but his talents in that line were not of a very brilliant order. In 1751 he published a volume of his productions, one of which consists of 104 verses, which rehearsed the labours of himself and others in various parts of the kingdom. In one place he slightly refers to this locality. He says :—

To Chipping and to Wycoler
We go each fortnight day;
I wish we could see fruit appear,
For which we still do pray.
At Sherfanside and Brimmicroft
The work it hath begun,
And Satan's soldiers they do fight
For fear we take Blackburn.

Now, this work was published in 1751, and from the

allusion to efforts made to introduce Methodism into this town we gather that at an early period, attacks were made upon this citadel of sin, and that, in spite of "Satan's soldiers," the Methodist standard was erected in the place about the above-named period.

Having thus prepared the way for a consideration of the commencement of Methodism in this immediate locality, we will at once proceed to give an account of its origin and progress, as far as we have been able to ascertain.

We have already said that John Nelson was one of the first preachers who visited this neighbourhood. His name appears upon the minutes for this Round in 1755. On one of his visits he preached at Lower Darwen, when several were awakened and saved; amongst them were a respectable farmer named Howarth and three of his brothers. Soon after this, James Oddie, another of the first preachers, followed John Nelson on this ground, who took immediate steps to form the scattered converts into a class, consisting of the above-named Mr. Howarth, his three brothers, and eight other persons. This took place about 1758. This class was the first approach towards any Methodistical organization in this part of Lancashire. It was led by a James Clegg at the first, but subsequently by the aforesaid Mr. Howarth until his death in 1811. The place of meeting was a private house at what is called The Top o' th' Coal Pits.* The preaching services were held in a building in the village called Harwood

*In 1776, when the Lancashire circuits were undergoing various changes in their formation, we find down in the Liverpool Circuit Steward's book for that year "Top o' th' Coal Pits," 17s. 0d., and "Moulden Water," 7s. 0d. How these two remote and obscure places found their way into the Liverpool book we cannot tell.

Barn, which building, after undergoing various alterations, still continues. Lower Darwen has thus the honour of being the first ground on which the tree of Methodism was planted in what is now called the Blackburn Circuit. Lower Darwen also had the honour of sending out into the ministry a valuable and useful labourer, viz.: the Rev. William Howarth, son of the first convert to Methodism in that village, who, after spending nearly 50 years in the ministerial work, died in 1842.

Soon after the first class was formed we find Mr. Wesley upon the ground, which was his very first visit to this locality. He writes in his journal, 1759: "I preached at Bolton, and on Friday, the 11th of May, about 9, at Lowerdarwent, a small village near Blackburn." Two years afterwards he was there again, and says, "April 1761, after preaching at Bolton I rode on to Lower Darwent, near Blackburn, where a large congregation behaved with deep seriousness. Leaving honest Mr. Grimshaw to preach in the morning, I set out early," &c. The Incumbent of Haworth, it seems, was with him on this occasion, and whilst he pursued his way to Kendal, Grimshaw remained to take the early morning service. Those early services, generally held at five o'clock, were common among the first Methodists. They thought it no great task to turn out of bed on a cold winter's morning and walk several miles to hear a sermon. The word of the Lord was precious in those days. In the record just given we read an important sentence, viz.: that on his arrival at Lower Darwen he found a large congregation awaiting him. This gathering consisted no doubt of persons from the surrounding towns and villages, as well as of the inhabitants

of the place, who, for the first time, would hear the gospel from the lips of a Methodist preacher. It was a high day for Lower Darwen when two such men as John Wesley and William Grimshaw poured their over-powering eloquence upon those subdued and astonished auditors. From that congregation many would bear away to other places the seed which had been deposited in their hearts, to yield fruit elsewhere, "in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred fold."

We have said that the societies of Lancashire and Yorkshire were at the first placed under the care of Mr. Grimshaw, who regularly visited them, gave tickets, and exercised pastoral authority over them. The societies comprised within this range of supervision constituted what was called Grimshaw's Round. In the year 1753, this Round was placed on the minutes of Conference, under the heading of the Haworth Circuit. This sphere of labour extended from Otley in Yorkshire, to Whitehaven in Cumberland, with Haworth as its head, chiefly on account of it being the residence of Mr. Grimshaw. In this circuit were included the few societies which had been formed in this locality. Here was indeed a real old-fashioned Methodist circuit. It extended over a hundred miles of country, and generally took the preachers about six weeks to complete the Round.

In olden times these circuits were extensive spheres of labour, involving on the part of the preachers, long absences from home, and great sacrifices of social and domestic comfort as well as exposure to the brutal persecutions which they had often to endure. But God raised up men fitted

for the work,—men of deep piety, fervent zeal, strong faith, and earnest prayer; men who, although not highly educated, were nevertheless clear headed and warm hearted workers in the vineyard of the Lord, who were mighty in the scriptures, and full of compassion for the souls of the people. Would that there were more like them in the present day Much has been said about the contrast between the past and present race of Methodist preachers, especially in reference to the zeal, privations, and labours of the former as compared with the latter. In forming an estimate of the two we must not forget the great difference, not only in the men themselves, but in the spirit of the age, as well as in the materials with which they have to deal. The men of that day would hardly have done for this, any more than the men of the present day would have done for those hard rough times.

But after all, we don't know really whether the men of former days had not better times of it than those of the present. There was a sort of excitement and chivalry in the stormy and stirring scenes through which they passed, thoroughly unlike the prosaic and stereotyped labours of the present time. With all the rough rides, hard fare, and itinerant wanderings of former days, many an old preacher who has lived to work in modern times has sighed again for his horse and saddlebags, and has greatly preferred the evangelistic rambles of his early ministry to the dry and formal routine of what are called these better times. It is true our predecessors had much to pass through that was not pleasant to flesh and blood; their stipends were small, and their accommodations were often of the most meagre

sort;* they had, however, counterbalancing advantages. Their small allowances were often supplemented by presents of corn, potatoes, poultry, eggs, or bacon. The saddlebags of the old preachers on their visits into the country districts were often filled with good things for home consumption, contributed by the hands of farmers' wives or daughters, bacon forming one of the principal gifts, which gave rise to the vulgar epithet addressed to the preachers of that day, viz :—"Old preach for bacon." Some fault-finding people are fond of comparing the salaries of the modern preachers with those of the past, and turn up their eyes in astonishment at the difference. On one occasion, a young impertinent local preacher, who had more boldness than discretion, was present at a quarterly meeting when the ministers of the circuit were being paid their salaries, "Ah," said he, with a sigh, "It is not now as it was in the days of Wesley and John Nelson. When they came to preach in these parts they ate blackberries when they had done, and slept on their saddlebags." The superintendent minister, who occupied the chair, knew the spirit in which these words were uttered, quietly, but sarcastically, said, "Well, brother ——, I do not deny that such was the case, but the question is, ought it to have been so? Now, you are a young local preacher, and it is whispered about that you are purposing to offer yourself to become a travelling preacher. Now, let us suppose that you had become one, and that last Sunday you did what I did, viz.: preached three times, walked several miles, and met

*Christopher Hopper says when he travelled in this Circuit "I met with a perfect hurricane at Bacup; I was shut up amidst mountains of snow, with a poor old woman for four days, with little fire and small provisions. But God was with us."

classes in every place, whether would you have supped on blackberries or beefsteaks ?" It is said that the young fellow was silenced by the chairman's very practical and pointed question.

But to resume our history, we have said that all the societies about here were placed under the head of the Haworth Circuit. After so continuing for about twenty years, they were divided into various other circuits, Colne being the head of the one in which Blackburn was found. The men who were appointed to the Colne Circuit visited in their turn the places in this locality. Amongst them were some whose names in Methodism have become as household words, such as Samuel Bardsley, Wm. Brammah, Alexander Mather, Christopher Hopper, Charles Atmore, and others. These were champions in God's cause, brave old soldiers of the cross, who fought in the high places of the field, and who left behind them memories which can never perish. During the time Mr. Atmore laboured in the Colne Circuit a great revival took place, in which Blackburn largely participated. He says, "The whole circuit, with the exception of the north of Pendle Hill, seemed to flame with the glory of God. I regard those two years as the most useful of my life." The precise time when Methodism was first introduced into Blackburn, we are not able to state. There is very little doubt but that it originated with some of those who heard Mr. Wesley, John Nelson, and others at Lower Darwen. For some time the members would probably worship in private houses and other temporary buildings until they found it necessary to provide a regular place of worship. We regret that we have not been able to ascertain

the circumstances under which the Blackburn society was first formed. Although not able to ascertain its exact origin in the town, we can, nevertheless, trace a very close approach to it at an early period. In 1758, as we have already said, a class was formed at Lower Darwen, which no doubt embraced the scattered members of the neighbourhood—Blackburn included; in proof of which we find on the class paper one Henry Butler, stay maker, of Blackburn. Some of the residences are not given, and we are left to infer that others came from this town and met in class at the Top o' th' Coal Pits before one was formed in Blackburn.

Again, we have proofs of its near approach on another side. At a small hamlet named Brimmicroft, not far from Hoghton, a society was formed about the same time as that of Lower Darwen. In 1764, it consisted of 36 members, and was divided into two classes, one of which was led by a Richard Aspinall of Livesey, and the other by a John Grime of Brimmicroft. In this obscure and humble place Methodism formed its first home in that part of Lancashire. This hamlet, which consisted of about a dozen houses, formed the centre of a scattered district over which the members of society were spread; a considerable number of which were from Hoghton, Livesey, and that neighbourhood. William Darney, in his rehearsal hymn of 1751, says;—

> At Sherfanside and *Brimmicroft*
> The work it hath begun,
> And Satan's soldiers they do fight
> For fear we take Blackburn.

We are disposed to think from the two last lines that the attack on Blackburn was made from this quarter. During the ten or fifteen years which followed 1764, the society at

Brimmicroft greatly diminished, occasioned, no doubt, by the formation of fresh classes in the villages around, and then it altogether disappeared from the Circuit book. We find it again appearing in the Blackburn book in 1787, with a few shillings for its quarterage, indicative of its enfeebled state, until 1795, when it ceased to exist. It is very probable that as Hoghton was so near to Brimmicroft, the bulk of the society, as well as the place for preaching, would be transferred from the latter to the former. The large and flourishing society which we find at Hoghton in 1786, confirms this supposition. From the locality just described it is evident that Methodism found its way into Preston and Blackburn.

When we reach 1780, however, we begin to acquire more light on the subject. In that year we find that a preaching house existed, and in the same year Mr. Wesley paid his first visit to Blackburn, and preached therein. He says: "May 27, 1780. I preached in Todmorden church with great enlargement of heart. In the afternoon we went on to Blackburn. It seemed the whole town was moved. But the question was where to put the congregation. We could not stand abroad because of the sun, so as many as could squeezed into the preaching house. All the chief men of the town were there. It seems as if the last will be first." From the last sentence we are led to think that Methodism had been but tardily received by the Blackburnians of that day, which led him to note the contrast between his popular reception then and their previous conduct. The population at that time was about 8,000, just one-tenth of what it is at present. The fame of Mr. Wesley had no doubt preceded him, and when he came the town was filled

with excitement. He says: "The whole town was moved." His congregation was respectable as well as large. He writes: "All the chief men of the town were there." Twelve months after this, viz., in 1781, he paid a second visit to this town, but simply writes: "In the evening I preached in the new house at Blackburn." The words, "I preached in the *new* house at Blackburn," afford us some clue as to the length of time that preaching house had been in use. On his second visit he calls it a *new* one, which expression leads to the supposition that his first and previous visit, twelve months before, was on the occasion of its opening.

This building was known as the Old Calender House, its name indicating its previous uses. It had probably been purchased by the society, and adapted for divine worship. A house was attached to the chapel which was for the accommodation of the preachers when on this side of the circuit, as well as for the residence of the chapel keeper. It is now used as an ironmonger's shop. This old preaching place is still in existence. It stands in Old Chapel Street, on the right hand side going out of Penny Street. It is now used as a bobbin mill, and is in the occupation of Mr. R. Sharples. It may be easily recognised by the two upper circular-headed windows. From this place the street probably derived its name. Mean and humble as this old fabric appears, yet it has associations of the most hallowed nature. Its walls have often echoed with the voices of John Wesley, Dr. Coke, and other distinguished early Methodist preachers. In this old sanctuary many souls were saved, and concerning numbers it may be said "this and that man were born there." As you pass it by and throw a glance upon it, let a feeling of respect

rise in your breasts, and be thankful that you worship in a better temple.

Mr. Wesley's next visit was in 1784. He writes:—"April 16th, in the evening I preached at Blackburn, where also the society is lively and continually increasing." He then says, "On Sunday, the 18th," that is two days after the just-named date, "I preached at five, to a numerous congregation, but not one well-dressed person among them, either morning or evening. Poor Blackburn!" The character of his audience on this occasion presented a striking contrast to the one that favoured him on his previous visit. Then all the chief men of the town flocked to hear him, now not a well-dressed person was to be seen amongst his hearers. Not that Mr. Wesley valued people by the clothes they wore. No, he was the last man in the world to have done so. But he was struck with the contrast in this point between his former and latter congregation, and made a note of it by remarking, "Poor Blackburn!" From the former part of the passage just quoted from the Journal we obtain some light on the spiritual condition of the society at Blackburn. He says, "All the society are lively and increasing." Things seemed to have been in an encouraging state. Prosperity and progress prevailed amongst them. Let us for a moment step into that humble sanctuary in Old Chapel Street during one of their lively services. A congregation of warm-hearted, zealous Methodists is assembled. The men in their gaiters and smallclothes on one side of the chapel, and the women in their semi-quaker bonnets on the other, as was then the universal custom. Listen to their singing, how rousing and inspiring! See how they drink in the word of life, whilst

they listen to some stirring old preacher with his trumpet voice and tongue of fire! How hearty are their responses! They were not afraid of saying "Amen" in those days. What a contrast between the full-souled worship of that generation and the present! How wide the difference between the responsive devotions of 1780 and the *amenless* and death-like silence of our modern congregations. If one of those lively old Methodists were to come to life again, and some Sunday morning should give us one of his real, hearty, old-fashioned "Amens," how it would startle and electrify the whole congregation. Let us not be misunderstood on this point. When we speak of the absence of audible responses, we are far from thinking or saying that such is indicative of the want of devotion in all Christian congregations. Amongst the Methodists, however, who have been "brought up" to the practice, we are afraid that its absence is symptomatic of the decline of that earnest devotion which characterised the worship of their fathers in the gospel. We allude not to the rude, loud, and uproarious shout which some indulge in, and which must be as insulting to God as it is offensive to man; but we speak of an Amen bursting from a warm, gushing, loving, and inspired soul. Such a response as the psalmist would have approved of, who said—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord."

Immense changes have taken place in the habits of society and the occupations of the people since the days to which we have just referred, viz., 1781. There were no tall chimnies then, nor rattling machinery, nor crowded mills,

nor gas, nor steam, but with slow and patient strokes the weaver drove his shuttle through the loom.* Instead of this town teeming with the masses which now populate its streets, its extent was very limited, and its inhabitants numbered only about 8 or 9,000. Men as well as things have changed, some for the better, others for the worse. In manufacture, in agriculture, in commerce, in science, in education, and in the condition of the working classes, in all these respects great and marvellous improvements have been effected; but it is to be feared that in earnest piety and zeal for God no great change for the better has transpired. Much of the plain, sterling, unpolished gold of godliness of that day is not to be found in the religion of this electro-plated age. It is to be feared that the mantles of our departed fathers, as far as zeal and devotion are concerned, have not fallen largely and broadly upon their descendants.

We have just said that in 1781 the society in Blackburn was in a prosperous condition, and its numbers were steadily increasing, rendering a new and more commodious place of worship necessary. We find accordingly that steps were taken to obtain one. Soon after that time, providence directed to this town two good men who were zealous and devoted Methodists, viz., Mr. William Banning and Mr. George

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*Just about this period a cotton mill or two were erected. The Peels of Blackburn built one at Altham, and a spinning mill also existed at Wensley Fold. The Peels were just then coming into note. Mr. Wesley was once thrown into the company of the head of the family at Bury, and wrote in his journal the following words—"I was invited to breakfast by Mr. Peel, a calico printer, who a few years ago began with £500, and is now supposed to have gained £50,000;" and, he adds, "O, what a miracle if he lose not his soul!" If Mr. Wesley deemed his danger great when worth £50,000, what was his condition when, in 1830, he died worth £1,200,000?

Walkden, about whom we shall have more to say a little further on. It was to the efforts of these two good men that the erection of a new chapel must be ascribed. In a brief memoir of Mr. Banning, published by his son, we are informed of the steps taken to accomplish this undertaking. The writer says:—"The temporary chapel, better known as the Old Calander House, soon became too small. So great was the spirit of hearing that the people could not be accommodated; it was therefore determined that a new chapel should be erected, if land could be obtained. Application was made to a J. Sudall, Esq., for ground to build on, the time and place being fixed for an interview, but on the morning of the day appointed, a message was sent to say that the gentleman had suddenly died, and that his friends declined to sell the land. In this dilemma Mr. Walkden called upon his friend to enquire what course they were to take next. Mr. Banning replied, "Take a little breakfast with us, and then we will pray about it." After engaging in prayer, Mr. Banning further said, "In answer to prayer, we shall have a chapel in such a field." Mr. Walkden, knowing that the owner was an enemy to the Methodists, said, "He will never let you have it." Mr. Walkden was mistaken; application was made and land obtained, and shortly after a chapel was erected on the site of the present one. The money was raised almost entirely by Messrs. Banning and Walkden, who begged through the town, calling nearly at every house. The situation was very different from what it is at present. The chapel was surrounded on all sides with beautiful gardens, green fields, and a few gentlemen's houses. At that time Clayton street was

considered the most respectable part of the town, and presented a striking contrast to its present dirty, dingy, ill-paved, and inferior condition. A burial ground was provided at the same time, and we learn from the register of interments that the first persons buried were two individuals of the names of John and Charles Pearson, of Salmesbury, who died in 1786. As they were of the same name, and came from the same place, and died within two days of each other, we judge that they were brothers, and were carried off by the same affliction. The total number of interments amounted to upwards of two hundred, amongst them being the Rev. Joseph Drake, one of the circuit ministers, who died in 1815, and was buried in front of the present chapel. It is a solemn thought that betwixt two and three hundred of the slumbering dead lie buried within the precincts of this place, and that every Sabbath, when the congregation meets to worship God, they kneel over the graves of their ancestors. Contemporaneous with the erection of the chapel was the formation of a Sunday school, the history of which will be found on another page. The trustees of the new sanctuary were some of them men of mark. The following are their names :—

William Sagur, merchant, Colne.

John Wood, weaver, Padiham.—This John Wood was a zealous local preacher, and one of the earliest members of society in Padiham. When he became a local preacher he went to the Preston Sessions to obtain a license to preach. Having obtained it, and as he was leaving, a noisy rabble outside disturbed the business of the court within, when one of the magistrates said to

him contemptuously, "There, go and reform that crowd." John Wood immediately availed himself of the opportunity, and went at once and preached perhaps the first Methodist sermon which those rude Prestonians ever heard.

Roger Crane, ironmonger, Preston.—A noted Methodist in that town.

Michael Emmott, upholsterer, Preston, who became a travelling preacher, and died, after spending fifty years in the ministry.

William Bramwell, currier, Preston.—This was the sainted and ever-memorable Bramwell, whose eminent piety and eloquent ministry have rendered his name immortal.

John Crossley, farmer, Hoghton.

John Walmsley, yeoman, Walton-le-Dale.

William Banning, breadbaker, Blackburn.

John Howarth, weaver, Blackburn.

Nicholas Aspinall, weaver, Blackburn.

George Walkden, yeoman, Blackburn.

Concerning John Crossley, William Banning, and George Walkden we shall have something more to say. This deed bears date 1785. Having secured a commodious place of worship, a minister's residence, a burial ground, and a Sabbath school, Methodism had then acquired a position of influence and respectability which it had not known before. About the time when the building was completed we find Mr. Wesley visiting the town, probably to open the new chapel, although he makes no allusion to that fact in his journal. He writes:—"1786, Monday, April 17.—I went on to Blackburn, which was sufficiently crowded, it being the

fair day. No house would contain the people, so I stood abroad and expounded that awful scripture, 'I saw the dead small and great stand before God.' All was still as night, unless when they sung, then their voices were as the sound of many waters." The congregation being large, and unable to crowd into the newly-erected sanctuary, the service was held in the open air. Tradition does not supply us with any information as to where Mr. Wesley preached on the occasion. This is somewhat strange, because in most other places where he held out-door services the exact spot where he stood has been made known by the fathers to their children. The last *recorded* visit of Mr. Wesley to Blackburn was in 1788. We have said his last *recorded* visit, because it is believed by some that he was here in 1790. We have no mention of the latter date in his journal. This, however, is no proof that he was not here in that year, because by some means a considerable portion of the journal of that date was lost, and of course any account of his having been at Blackburn was lost along with it.* Concerning his visit in 1788, he says :—

*Since writing the above, we have ascertained that in all probability Mr. Wesley was at Blackburn in 1790. In the recently-published Life of Wesley, by the Rev. L. Tyerman, we find the following plan of labours, accompanied with a note of Mr. Wesley, to the following effect :—" As many persons desire to know where I am from this time till the Conference (1790), I here set down my route, which, if God permit, I shall keep till that time." After giving a list of dates and places from March to May, we find amongst them "Blackburn, April 13th." As nothing occurred to prevent him keeping this appointment, the conclusion is that he was here in that year. This fact will furnish us with a clue to another. In the brief memoir of Mr. William Banning, it is stated that on one of Mr. Wesley's visits to his house, Mr. B. took him to a neighbouring village to inspect a new chapel which was then being erected. The building met with Mr. Wesley's approval, and he said :—" I have a favour to beg, that you have no pews in the bottom of this chapel, except one for the leading singers, and be sure to accommodate the

"I went on through miserable roads to Blackburn, where, notwithstanding the continued rain, the new preaching-house was thoroughly filled with serious and well-behaved people."

The house in which Mr. Wesley was entertained by Mr. Banning on his visits to Blackburn stands in Astley-gate, at the top of King-street, and is now in the occupation of Mr. Till, clothier, &c. It was here Mr. Banning resided for many years, and carried on the business of a grocer and breadbaker.

Having sketched the progress of Methodism in Blackburn up to the time when the first chapel in Clayton street was erected, we will now take a glance at its movements in some other places in the circuit, and then resume our account of Blackburn. Let us next consider its rise and progress in

Over Darwen.

Methodism gained a footing in Darwen somewhere about

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poor as well as your circumstances will admit; they are God's building materials in the erecting of His church; the rich make good scaffolding but bad building materials; they require so much polishing." It is certain that this building could be no other than the Darwen first chapel, which was opened in 1791. We thus arrive at a positive conclusion that Over Darwen *was* favoured with Mr. Wesley's presence, if not with his preaching. This visit was just about twelve months before his death, and in the eighty-sixth year of his age. There is no doubt that he preached when at Blackburn for the last time. What a marvellous man he was, physically, as well as in many other respects. He was then fast approaching towards *ninety*, and yet pursuing a course of labour which involved preaching every day, and sometimes twice a day, as well as travelling over terrible roads. What an impressive sight would the Blackburn Methodists behold as he ascended their pulpit steps on his last visit. About the same time, Mr. Wesley was heard by that remarkable man, Henry Crabb Robinson, who says in his autobiography,—"I heard John Wesley preach in the great round meeting house at Colchester. He stood in a wide pulpit, and on each side of him stood a minister, and the two held him up, having their hands under his armpits. His feeble voice was barely audible; but his reverend countenance, especially his long white locks, formed a picture never to be forgotten."

1785, when a class was formed, consisting of six or seven members. It is believed by some that Mr. Wesley was at Over Darwen in 1764, but on what ground that belief is based we know not, as not the least reference to such a circumstance is made in his journal. It is possible, however, that as he was several times in the neighbourhood of Sough and Entwisle he might pay a visit to this town or pass through it. That Mr. Wesley was at Sough there can be no doubt whatever. The late Mr. Ralph Entwistle, father of Mrs. Rowe of Darwen, resided there, as did his father before him. Mr. Entwistle was a thorough Methodist, and for many years was in connection with the Darwen society. He felt a great pleasure when referring to Mr. Wesley's visits to his father's house, and especially so when he described how Mr. W. placed his hands upon his own head and prayed for a blesssing upon him. He ever preserved a most vivid recollection of that event, although only five years of age when it took place. The introduction of Methodism into Darwen took place in the following way: About eighty-five years ago a dreadful accident occurred at Preston races by the falling of the grand stand, by which some were killed and many injured. It happened on the day after the accident that Mr. William Banning, of Blackburn, had occasion to go to Preston on business. On his way he overtook several men going to the races, whom he accosted, saying, "The judgment of God manifested yesterday does not deter you, it seems, from going to the same scenes of sin and folly to-day." "No," replied one of them, "everyone to his fancy." "Then your fancy," said Mr. B., "leads you to the races, and, perhaps, before night you may be dead, and your unhappy spirit

plunged into hell." These words of admonition did not fall upon all of them in vain, for one of them turned from his companions and went home. Sometime afterwards this individual met Mr. Banning, and told him how his words of warning on the way to Preston had sunk into his soul, and led him to live a better life. He further said that he came from Darwen, where there was no place of worship, and whose inhabitants were noted for their ungodliness. Mr. Banning invited him to join his class at Blackburn, which he did, and regularly walked the four miles until a society was formed in Darwen. Finding that no divine service was held in the place, Mr. B. requested him to open his house for preaching on the Sabbath following, to which he gave his consent. The novelty of the occasion drew together a motley group of hearers, consisting principally of rough half-civilized colliers. Some scoffed, but others were convinced of sin, and sought and found the Lord. Preaching was held in the same place on the following Sabbath with similar results, and was continued there and elsewhere as we shall have to describe. We regret that the source of information which supplies the forenamed incident does not give us the slightest clue to the name of the person who thus became the first Methodist in Over Darwen. In 1787 and 1788, the Rev. W. Bramwell, who was then stationed in the Blackburn circuit, made his way thither and preached on the Green, in the open air. He was generally accompanied by Mr. Banning, who was truly his right-hand man on those occasions. Here Mr. Bramwell poured forth on his rude hearers in thrilling and overpowering eloquence the gospel message, rousing some to thoughtfulness and true repentance, and

provoking others to mockery and scorn. Those out-door services were not without their fruit. Amongst the group of hearers who gathered round the preacher would be found a notorious individual named Burgoin Fish, who was young in years, but old in sin, and had acquired a name for wickedness for miles round. His chief distinction was in prize fighting, which, in that day and in that locality, was very common. Let us imagine that we see this young champion boxer among the mocking crowd at one of those open-air services. Lo! an arrow, shot from the bow of the preacher, and directed by the Divine Spirit, has reached his heart. It has found its way through the joints of the harness of his obduracy and pride, and stricken the very last man that would be thought of, and thereby literally realizing the words of some old poet:—

> How many a word at random spoken,
> A wound hath healed, a heart hath broken;
> And many an arrow by the archer sent,
> Hath reached the mark the archer never meant.

So it has often been the case with the preaching of the gospel, and so it proved in the experience of Burgoin Fish. If he had joined his fellows at the commencement in rude laughter, his thoughts are now arrested and directed into another channel. He begins to think and feel, and ask the question, What can these things mean? and he goes away to ponder over the words he has heard. Whilst under these impressions, an event transpires which brings his experience to a crisis. Just at that time he was under an engagement to fight a pitched battle with another noted boxer, and the affair was to come off at Turton Fair, then a notorious place for drunkenness and prize fighting. When on his way to keep his engagement

he was suddenly arrested by an inward voice saying to him, "Man, thou art destroying thyself!" Such was the powerful effect produced upon his mind, that he immediately resolved to relinquish his errand, and at once turned his footsteps homeward. His absence from the fair occasioned great surprise amongst his old companions, and his quick return caused equal astonishment at home. He immediately began to pray for mercy; his repentance became deep and genuine, and the anguish of his soul grew fierce and terrible. After enduring great conflict and sorrow, he at length found peace with God, through believing in Jesus. The change he underwent was marvellous in the eyes of all who knew him. His conversion proved real, as was manifest in his future conduct. He not only became a meek and humble christian, but also as zealous a champion for Christ, as he had been previously for the devil. The tide of persecution ran high at Darwen, and now that Burgoin had changed sides he came in for a full share of it. When assailed by provoking words or rude assaults, he sometimes found it difficult to subdue his old propensities, and one blow from his hand would have laid the boldest scoffer low. But grace restrained him, and he was enabled to pray for those who despitefully used him. He stood bravely by the preachers, and suffered no man to do them harm. On one occasion, a rude fellow refused all entreaties to be quiet, Burgoin fixed his eye upon him reprovingly; at length he made his way through the crowd, took the man up in his arms, and carried him away from the congregation, and compelled him to behave himself. On another occasion, a man named Dick made his way up to the preacher and attempted to pull him down, when Burgoin

indignant at such conduct, seized hold of the offender and carried him to some water near at hand, and holding him over it, said, "Now, Dick, if thou dost not promise me to go home and not disturb us any more, thou shalt go right in." Dick gave the promise and quietly retired.

During the latter part of his days he lived at Glossop, where he died in the eighty-first year of his age, after being a member of society nearly sixty years, and a leader for a considerable length of time. One utterance on his death-bed is worth printing in letters of gold, and being read by every Methodist in the world; it is the following:—Being asked how long he had been a member of society, he replied, "fifty nine years;" and on being questioned whether he had ever been out of society, he replied, "*No, not one hour, and in all that time I never intentionally gave my leader one moment's trouble, and never absented myself from my class wilfully, and never was absent without my leader knowing the cause beforehand.*" His death was calm and happy, and was a beautiful realization of the words "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." So much for Burgoin Fish. We have, perhaps, devoted too much time to one individual, but his remarkable conversion, his high character and useful life, together with the godly savour which he has left behind him in Darwen, will form a sufficient reason for what we have done.

Amongst other early members of society who took a prominent part in its affairs, were three good men, named William Greenwood, William Crook, and Richard Cross. These formed a godly trio, who, amidst great persecution, "Nobly for their Master stood." In looking over the list of

members, nearly half a century after the formation of the society, we find the name of William Greenwood there still filling the office of a leader, from which list he soon after disappears, and "was not, for God took him."

After out-door services had in some measure ceased, a room over a blacksmith's shop, in Wellington Fold, was used for divine worship. After a short stay there service was removed to a larger room in Water street. In this place the Sabbath school was commenced. Such institutions in that day were very rare, in fact, altogether unknown in many parts of the kingdom. The formation of one at Darwen created considerable excitement. The originators of the school found their means were very limited, but they set to work and begged a quantity of wood, and made, with their own hands, forms for the children to sit upon, and others went into the neighbourhood to beg books and other needful things. Their efforts were crowned with success, and about eighty years ago the school was opened for the first time, with about a hundred scholars, which was a large number considering what the population was at that time. One of the first superintendants was a Mr. France, an officer of excise, who was appointed to Darwen just about the time the school was opened, and who became one of its most active and zealous supporters. This noble institution, commenced under the circumstances we have named, has held on its way for about three-quarters of a century, affording instruction and blessing to thousands of children, and honourable christian labour to multitudes of teachers. When we consider the success which has ever attended it, and the prosperous condition in which it is at present found, with its 700

scholars, and its vast array of teachers and office bearers, we may well rejoice and be thankful for what has been wrought. The Methodists of Darwen are justly proud of their Sabbath school, and are inclined to inscribe on their banner what is written on the flag of the Scots Greys, "Second to none." Honour be to the men who were its originators, and equal praise be to those who during the long, long years of its continuance gave it their assistance, and none the less to those who are at present rendering it their labour, patronage, and support, and all the glory be to God.

The congregation and school having rapidly increased in Water-street, still larger accommodation was called for. On the next change, in 1790 or 1791, the friends were bold enough to propose the erection of a new chapel, with room sufficient to accommodate the Sunday school. The site selected was in Back lane. It is said that the opposition to Methodism was so strong that no masons in the town would touch it, and that workmen had to be obtained from Preston to build it. This place, after being in use some years, was followed by a larger one, built or enlarged at a cost of £2,500, and opened in 1839. After being in use as a place of divine worship for upwards of twenty years, it was turned to Sabbath school uses, and has recently undergone extensive alterations for the accommodation of the Day as well as Sunday schools. This Centenary chapel was followed by the erection, in 1865, of the noble structure now in use in Railway street. It is a spacious, open, and commodious sanctuary, built at a cost of nearly £7,000, and will seat about 1,250 people. May the glory of this latter house exceed all the former in spiritual manifestation and power,

as it does in architectural beauty and spaciousness.

HOGHTON.

We will next direct attention to Hoghton. Methodism found its way into this place at a comparatively early period, and spread extensively amongst its hills and valleys, until its society became one of the largest and most flourishing in the Circuit. In 1787, it sent more money to the quarter board than Preston, Chorley, Haslingden, and Bacup, which places were then parts of the Blackburn circuit. Prior to the erection of the chapel in the year 1794, divine service was held first in a barn adjoining a farm-house called Bolton Hall. This house was for some time in the occupation of a Mr. John Crossley, a well-to-do farmer, a thorough Methodist, and one of the leaders of the society. For some years Hoghton appeared in the Circuit book under the head of Bolton Hall, and several times the quarter-day was held there. The Mr. John Crossley just named was a kind man and a sincere christian. Although not distinguished for any particular gifts beyond his neighbours in a similar station of life, yet he was remarkably appreciative of womanly influence, having been blessed in his lifetime with no less than five wives, and, as a proof of the superiority of the taste and judgment displayed in their selection, it is said they all proved to be good ones. John Crossley was a brave man in such ventures, and certainly was not one of those to whom the old proverb could in the least apply,—"A faint heart never won a fair lady." Tradition says that when he was an unmarried man he drove in his light cart one Sunday all these ladies to a distant lovefeast, little dreaming that each in her turn would live to become his wife. It is further said

that at his death he left to a friend a pair of silk stockings which he had worn on his five wedding days, expressing a wish that his friend would wear them on *his* wedding-day, and that he might be as happy on that occasion as he had been. Four of these wives, we believe, lie buried in one grave under the floor of Blackburn chapel, and the fifth, which survived him, was interred in Hoghton burial ground.

Amongst the good and zealous men of the Hoghton society were Ralph and Robert Pearson. Several striking coincidences took place in their religious life, such as the following: They were cousins, they were awakened and converted on the same night, they were appointed leaders at the same meeting, they lived near to each other all their lives, and both of them were 82 years of age when they died, and within a few days of each other they both passed away to heaven. Other equally good men and women were members of the church at Hoghton, whose names are still remembered with affection. Amongst the pious dead whose mortal remains repose in Hoghton graveyard are those of Mr. and Mrs. Banning. Mr. Banning was a native of Stafford, but was led by providence to Blackburn in the year 1784, where he carried on the business of bread baking. He took an active part in promoting the cause of Methodism, and had the honour of entertaining Mr. Wesley on his visits to this town. Mrs. Banning was a kind-hearted christian woman, active and useful in all good works, and a real mother in Israel. Her name is held in loving remembrance, as well as that of her husband, by her descendants unto the third and fourth generation. After the death of Mrs. Banning, her aged partner left Blackburn, and went to reside with his son-in-law and

daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Dall, of Roach, near Hoghton, where he spent the remaining years of his life, working and witnessing for Christ until he reached the age of ninety, when the weary wheels of life stood still, and his ever-active and noble spirit departed to its full reward, on August 3rd, 1846. Space will not allow us to dwell longer on the character and life of this devoted man. As a local preacher he was in labours more abundant than his brethren. He braved the storms of persecution, and was instrumental in introducing Methodism into many of the towns and villages around. We will give one incident in his life as a specimen of his zeal and faithfulness. He once went to preach in a house near Ribchester. It seems that he had obtained the consent of the master of the house to do so without the knowledge of his wife. When Mr. Banning was on his way he met the poor husband trembling with fear, who entreated him not to go forward, as his wife had become so exasperated that she had set a saucepan of water on the fire to boil, declaring that she would scald the preacher to death if he came to their house to preach. Notwithstanding this alarming state of things Mr. Banning proceeded to the house and talked kindly to the enraged woman, who, in a while, calmed down; and when the husband arrived, to his great astonishment he found both his wife and the preacher on their knees wrestling for salvation. When the time of service came the people flocked in; the water was boiling on the fire, but there was no hand to throw it on the preacher. This woman became truly converted, and on her death-bed she blessed the man whose life she had once purposed to destroy.

Mr. John Banning, son of the above, was also for some

time a resident in Hoghton. He was a man of eminent piety and deep devotion. His high character and kindly disposition won for him universal esteem. He became an acceptable and useful local preacher. His pulpit gifts were of a very superior order, which rendered his preaching popular in other circuits as well as his own. In 1827, Mr. Banning removed from this circuit to Preston, and subsequently to Manchester, where he spent the remainder of his days beloved and respected by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. Mr. Banning compiled a brief but interesting memoir of his venerable father, which was published after his death, and to which we are indebted for some of the facts contained in these pages.

Mellor.

We will next direct attention to Mellor. Mellor is a village of some antiquity; it is generally supposed that the Romans had an encampment on the Moor, and tradition says that a castle once existed there. The moated ground on the summit of the neighbouring hill was probably of Roman origin, and was in some way connected with the military station of that people at Ribchester. Old historians tell us about strange and superstitious fancies prevailing among the inhabitants of this locality, such as Mellor Moor being the favourite dancing ground of the fairies; that a church which once existed in the place was swallowed up by an earthquake, and at certain times the bells might be heard ringing underground. Such superstitions, however, were not confined to Mellor, but prevailed all over the kingdom. To a great extent these foolish notions have died away before the advanced intelligence of the people. Whatever improvements the

Mellorites may have undergone themselves, not much can be said in that direction as regards the architectural condition of their village. We are somewhat surprised at this. We should have thought that its proximity to Blackburn, its pure and bracing air, and its magnificent scenery, would have made it a place of great resort to the toiling masses of the neighbouring towns, thereby causing accommodations to be provided in the shape of new erections. Probably the good people of Mellor do not covet such accessions to their number. At this we are not surprised, for many a beautiful and quiet spot, through the wickedness of men, has been turned into a scene of drunkenness and Sabbath breaking, and other riotous proceedings.

Mellor was somewhat early favoured with the introduction of Methodism. It is generally understood that Mr. Wesley once preached there, but we can find no record in his journal of having done so. Old Teddy Emmott, who died a few months ago, aged eighty, whose father was chapel keeper when he was a boy, said, when questioned on the subject, that he had no recollection of such an event, nor of hearing his parents speak of it. Nevertheless the impression is so strong and general that after all Mr. Wesley may have paid a visit to the place. One of the first members was a Mr. John Cook, who took an active part in establishing Methodism in the village, and who became its first leader. John Cook lived until he reached the ninety-second year of his age, and died in 1830. The first preaching place was a dwelling-house, called Abbott's house. Soon after divine service was conducted in the old Windmill upon the hill, and continued there until the chapel was erected. This old ruin was

galleried round, and furnished with a pulpit and other accommodations for divine worship. Many a tale has been related of what took place in that old mill. When the first lovefeast was held *fifteen* were present, which number awakened the astonishment of those who attended, and led them to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" Old Teddy Emmott described the "pranks" which the young folks used to play upon others during divine worship, such as pinning the dresses of the women together during the time they were engaged in prayer. He mentioned one startling circumstance of which he was an eye witness. One Sabbath, when service was going on in the old mill, four young men with their shirts placed over their outer garments and otherwise disguised, rushed suddenly into the place and produced great disturbance and alarm which completely put a stop to the service. Not a long time after this occurrence all these young men were seized with terrible convictions of the profanity of their conduct, and sent for some of the members to ask their forgiveness and to request them to pray for them. "Aye," said the old man, "and each one of them was in his grave before the twelve month end."

Notwithstanding all its hindrances, Methodism made its way, and gained a firm footing in the village. At one time it counted thirteen leaders, and one hundred and twenty-three members of society. The present chapel was built in the year 1802, and has undergone one or two enlargements. Its style is in keeping with the architecture of the day in which it was erected, we mean, of course, Methodist chapel architecture. The graveyard contains many of the pious dead. The "top o' Mellor" is a dear and precious spot to

many. We have often been surprised to find such strong affection cherished for the neighbourhood. It was the place of their birth, the home of their youth. It was in the Sunday school connected with the Methodist chapel that they were taught to read God's word, to hear of heaven and learn the way; and in those silent tombs their fathers and mothers, and brothers or sisters, lie interred. Methodism in Mellor has many friends, not only in the village but in many other places, and should any special efforts be put forth to advance its interests, to extend its borders, to build a new chapel, or to erect a Sabbath school—which is greatly needed—the assistance of those friends would not be found wanting.

Great Harwood.

Methodism is of long standing in Great Harwood. When the Blackburn circuit was first formed in 1787, we find it on the stewards' books. How long it had existed prior to that date we cannot say. Although we can find no reference to it in Mr. Wesley's journal, yet several authorities in the village seem to confirm a tradition that he visited Harwood and preached, once in an old thatched cottage in Church lane, where he was stoned during the time of service, and on another occasion in or near the house of the late Mr. Frank Clayton, at the Back of Bowler Hill. Mr. Clayton, the grandfather of Mrs. Walmsley of Harwood, was a sincere Methodist who opened his house for preaching, where it was continued for some years. At his house it is said Mr. Wesley stopped when in the neighbourhood. Divine service was afterwards held in a room over an entry in Cross Gates. A while after it was removed to the School room at what is called the Cliffe, where a Sabbath school was carried on, as

well as preaching. In 1822 a small chapel called the Butts was erected and occupied by the Methodists until 1853, when the present one was built. Prior to the erection of this chapel unhappy circumstances arose which it will profit no one to recite, and which had better be buried in forgetfulness for ever. These circumstances, however, obliged the society to remove to a cottage for awhile, and, through the liberality of the late vicar, the Rev. R. Dobson, the Sunday school was held in the Day school premises belonging to the Church of England. Sixty-two years ago the society numbered thirteen members, whose names were—N. Aspden, leader, Mary Clayton, Joseph Clayton, John Lightfoot, Ann Lightfoot, Isabel Vickers, Jane Taylor, Mary and Ellen Wolstenholme, Alice Swain, Ellen Peòcop, Mary Barron, and Ann Folds. In 1857 an enlargement of the chapel took place, in order to provide better accommodation for the Sabbath school. Notwithstanding their difficulties the Great Harwood Methodists have held on their way, and are looking forward with good hopes of seeing brighter and better days. In one thing at least they have the pre-eminence, in that they alone in the Blackburn circuit have the honour of possessing a chapel with no debt upon it. It is right to say that steps have been taken and projects formed towards the erection of a new chapel, and of turning the present one into a Day and Sunday school. It is hoped that all impediments which lie in the way of this scheme will disappear, and in the course of time the existence of a new and beautiful Methodist place of worship in Great Harwood will show what can be accomplished by a united and persevering people.

Oakenshaw.

In Oakenshaw the Methodist society is of more recent origin than most of the other places in the circuit. Sometime about the year 1820, a small class was formed, which met in the house of an aged female named Nelly Monk. The first time Oakenshaw was acknowledged in the books of the circuit was in 1822, when nine members were reported, with Robert Mercer as the leader. In 1824 the members' names were given for the first time, and were the following:—Christopher West, leader, Martha Waterhouse, Ellen Monk, Mark Johnson, Margaret Donkin. 2nd class. Abraham Birtwell, leader, Jane West, Nancy Donkin, Ellen Fisher, Jane Riley, John Mercer, with Peter Hargreaves and Daniel Birtwell, on trial. It is pleasing to know that two individuals whose names appear in this list are still living, and taking active parts in the church of which they were members *forty-seven* years ago, viz.: Mr. Abraham Birtwell and Mr. Mark Johnson. These two brethren, along with Mr. Abraham Fenton, of Mellor, are the oldest surviving office bearers in the Blackburn circuit. For nearly half a century they have been working for God, and are still labouring zealously in His cause. The first place of worship was a room in Stock row. In 1828 or 1829 a chapel was built and opened, the sermons on the occasion of its opening were preached by the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, one of the popular preachers of that day. In 1837 Miss Hart gave a piece of land for a burial ground and other purposes, together with a liberal donation towards the reduction of the debt upon the chapel. In 1853 the burial ground was fenced off and palisaded, the expense of which was defrayed by the late

Miss Barnes, of Church. In 1854 the new school-room was erected and opened. It is a useful and well-built edifice, and has proved a great addition to the convenience and the efficiency of both the Day and Sabbath school. In 1862 the present chapel was enlarged, and in 1867 still further additions were made by the introduction of a gallery and other alterations. In 1870 the late Mr. Croasdale left the sum of £100 towards the reduction of the debt upon the premises. The erection of an Infant school is in contemplation, and will be effected as soon as the way is clear and means are available. The friends are fully alive to the importance of education, as will be seen in the 290 scholars which are on the books of the Day school, and in the 370 which are on those of the Sunday school.

From this brief enumeration of efforts made in the cause of Methodism, it will evidently appear that the Oakenshaw friends have not been wanting in enterprise and liberality. Many have been their discouragements during the recent commercial panics, perhaps more than most other places in the circuit, but they have bravely borne the trial, and are beginning to share in the prosperity which has returned to the district. May that prosperity be large and permanent. And still more, may their spiritual prosperity far surpass that of the material. There is one fact which forms a matter of congratulation, and that is, that their repeated efforts have resulted in the possession of one of the neatest chapels in the circuit, and a property as compact as it is convenient.

RISHTON.

There is not a more interesting and promising society in the Blackburn Circuit than that of Rishton, and yet there is

not one that has had a greater struggle for existence. This has arisen not from persecution and opposition, so much as from the fewness and feebleness of its early membership. We find the society, which was very small at the beginning, making its appearance upon the circuit books for the first time in 1805. The number then was five, but no names were given. In 1809 they numbered six, whose names were :—William Smith, leader, John Fielding, Ellen Fielding, John Smith, Ann Smith, and Betty Noble. Twenty years afterwards the number remained about the same, but the names had undergone a change; they were—Thomas Pemberton, leader, Joseph Noble, Martha Noble, W. Noble, and Mary Duncan. Mr. Thomas Pemberton is still living. For fourteen years he walked from Stanhill to Rishton to meet this class, and only omitted doing so four times during that period. The society went on experiencing small alternations of increase and decrease until 1831, when it died out altogether. In 1836 another attempt was made to form a society, but after four years of feeble effort it again expired, and dropped off the books with a quarterly contribution to the circuit board of the marvellous sum of *ninepence!* For seventeen long years it remained unmentioned in the circuit books, but in 1857 it reappears under more auspicious and favourable circumstances, having a membership of about thirty, and a quarterage of £3 to report. A few years prior to the last-named date providence directed the steps of Mr. George Clarke and his family to Rishton. On his arrival he found that the preaching had been given up, and the class had fallen down to three members, viz.: Grace Noble, Grace Smith, Isabella Noble, and Ellen

Duckworth, on trial, but with no leader. Finding things in this state Mr. Clarke opened his house for preaching, and took charge of the class, and sought once more to make another start. God smiled on the efforts put forth, and soon cheering indications of better days began to present themselves. Another individual took an active part in promoting this improved state of the society, viz., Miss Grace Noble, who commenced a work of tract distribution, which she has continued, along with others, to the present time; and God has greatly blessed their labours. Soon after the preaching was resumed, thoughts began to arise in the minds of the zealous few of erecting a small chapel, but land could not be obtained. Two upper rooms of a cottage belonging to Mr. Clarke were shortly afterwards thrown into one, and a Sunday school commenced. Increasing success called for greater accommodation, when the two upper rooms of an adjoining cottage were added. They were then furnished with the means of seating about two hundred people. The cry still was, room for more. Land was soon obtained, and a chapel was built in 1862; in 1868 a gallery was introduced and other alterations made, which rendered it a very neat and commodious place of worship. If we trace the society's history from the time when preaching was held in the old hand-loom shop, in the cottage in High-street, and in the other places just referred to, to the erection of the present beautiful place of worship; if we consider the vicissitudes of the society until it had sunk down to only three members, and how it has progressed until it now counts *one hundred and twenty-six;* and if we look at the condition of things when the marvellous sum of *ninepence* represented their

financial ability, and contrast it with the sum of £64 per annum which is now sent to the quarter board, when these things are considered, the friends at Rishton have reason to thank God and take courage. They have also efficient Day and Sunday schools in operation, the former numbering on the books 338, and the latter 413, children; they have recently added an infant school-room to the premises, and in the course of a few months will have paid off every farthing of debt on the entire property. When these things are taken into consideration they show the result of combined, patient, and persevering effort, and they say to other struggling societies —*nil desperandum*, never despair. Much of the above success must be ascribed, instrumentally, to the labours and liberality of Mr. Clarke and his family, who still continue zealous helpers in God's cause at Rishton. But to God be all the praise.

New Row.

Tockholes and New Row were united at the first, both of them being reported as beginning their career in 1805. In 1809 the members of society were—Benjamin Nightingale, leader, Priscilla Nightingale, Jas. and Alice Pickup, Thos. and Jane Howarth, Henry and Mary Atkinson, Nancy Anderton, Ellen Anderton, Martha Brindle, Alice Crossley, Martha and Jas. Holden, Robt. Nightingale, and Betty Pickup. In 1816 New Row stood alone upon the books. In 1828 a great revival took place in that neighbourhood which gave many additions to the society, the number reaching about seventy. In the same year the chapel was erected; the land and stone were given by the late W. Turner, Esq. The gallery was put in about ten or fifteen years ago. It is

said that the chapel was built in six weeks, that is, the shell of it was up, and the roof on, and the place in the occupation of the Sunday school a little over forty-two days from the laying of the foundation stone. No place has suffered more from removals occasioned by bad trade than New Row, but it is hoped that the day is not far distant when both temporal and spiritual prosperity will visit them again.

Mellor Brook.

Mellor Brook's first report of income is given in the circuit stewards' book account for March 1844, and amounted to £2 7s. 6d. The first return of members was in the same year, and gave twenty-one as the number, with Messrs. Fenton, Turner, and Mrs. Brookes as the leaders. Five years after that the number had fallen to eight. Soon after this they gradually increased until they reached about forty in 1854, and have kept about that number ever since. Preaching was first held in a cottage house in the narrow passage just opposite the present chapel. It was then removed to one of the rooms in the Mill, where it was continued until 1853, when the chapel was erected. A board put up in the chapel contains the following information:—"The land on which this chapel is erected was the gift of Mrs. Brierley, of Blackburn, and Thos. Counsell, of Mellor Brook."

Harwood Street.

For some years the society of Harwood-street was connected with Clayton-street. In 1860 a cottage was taken in Harwood-street for the purpose of conducting divine worship therein, as well as a Sabbath school. The first service was held in it on Nov. 25th, of that year. In 1864 the service was removed to a warehouse in the same street,

kindly lent by W. Birtwistle, Esq. In 1865 the present School-Chapel was erected at a cost of £750, and was opened in June of that year by the Rev. Messrs. J. Bedford, S. Crump, and G. Scott. God has been with His people at this place and greatly blessed them. They number ninety members of society on the circuit schedule, and 250 children in the Sabbath school. They are an earnest, working people, and are deserving of all success.

WITTON.

The Witton society, like Harwood-street, branched off from the Clayton-street society, and is in an equally prosperous and promising condition. Two years ago it was constituted a separate society, and now has ninety-seven members on the class books, with about two hundred children in the Sabbath school. The present School-Chapel was erected at a cost of £1,100; the property includes land for the site of a new chapel. It was opened in August, 1868, and has hitherto proved a complete success, nearly every sitting being occupied, with the prospect also of more being required. Its recent origin renders further information unnecessary. If the parent church in Clayton-street has suffered loss by two of her children commencing independent organizations, let her parental heart rejoice in that she can boast of having such an offspring. And let those children not forget to cherish sentiments of filial affection towards their parent and their former home.

Having given sketches of Methodism in others places, we will now resume our account of Blackburn, with some observations on the general history of the circuit. We stated that from 1776 to 1786, Blackburn and the places around

were included in what was called the Colne circuit. In 1787, Blackburn was made the head of a circuit, and comprised the following places:—Blackburn, Preston, Chorley, Bacup, Haslingden, Hoghton, Brimmicroft, Plumton, Longridge, Ribchester, Flasmoss, Bank Top, Mill End, Longclough, Wardle Fold, Sikeside, Grane, Pickup Bank, Harwood, and Shehouses. It will probably be interesting to some to know what these places contributed to the quarter board. We will give the items of some of the principal places as they appear in the Circuit steward book for 1786:—Blackburn, £2 2s.; Hoghton, £1 6d.; Preston, £1 5s.; Chorley, 15s.; Haslingden, £1 1s.; Bacup, £1 11s.; Harwood, 2s. 6d. The smaller places were less in proportion. The total amount reached the marvellous sum of £14 17s. 9d., including a balance of £2 13s. 9d. from the previous quarter. On the expenditure side we find that, after paying the salaries of two ministers and £4 5s. for removal expenses, they still had left a balance in hand of 18s. It ought to be stated, however, that the above sums do not represent the total income, inasmuch as the "board money" did not appear on the circuit books. When the circuit was first formed several of the older societies, although in existence, did not appear on the plan. They were very small, and most likely would be connected with some neighbouring society, through which they would send their contribution. Darwen makes its appearance for the first time in 1790, and sends 6s.; Mellor also in the same year, and contributes 7s.; Rishton, in 1805, 12s.; Tockholes and New Row, in 1804, 17s. 5d., and New Row alone, in 1816, £1 2s. 10d.; Oakenshaw, in 1822, £1; and, as we have already stated, Great Harwood, in 1787, sent 2s. 6d.

Accrington appears on the circuit records for the first time in 1789 for 5s. No less than five of the above-named places have since become heads of circuits, namely,—Preston, Bacup, Haslingden, Chorley, and Accrington. Preston disappears from the Blackburn books in 1794, Bacup in 1795, Haslingden and Accrington in 1804, and Chorley in 1792. At what time they were made circuit towns we are not able to say; one or two of them are of somewhat recent origin. Most of these branches, as regards numbers, have nearly equalled the parent stem, and one of them, namely, Preston, has almost doubled.

When Blackburn became the head of a circuit, the first ministers appointed were the Rev. F. Wrigley and the Rev. E. Burbeck. A most extraordinary circumstance prevented the second minister fulfilling his appointment. We will give the facts as narrated in *Atmore's Memorials of Methodist Preachers.* The year preceding the one in which Mr. Burbeck was put down for Blackburn, he, along with the Rev. Joshua Keighley, was appointed to labour in Scotland. On their way to their alloted spheres of labour they met at Newcastle, and in company travelled on together. When they drew near to Keith a strange man, of terrible appearance, with a great club in his hand, presented himself before them, and put on a most threatening aspect, and after seeking to obstruct their course, he at length drove them before him for some distance, declaring at the same time that though they might go forward they would never return back beyond that place. They were both deeply affected by the strange occurrence, especially Mr. Burbeck. On reaching their circuits, they related the adventure to many of their friends.

After completing their year's labours, they left Scotland to take their English appointments, but, marvellous to relate, they were both seized with mortal sickness on their journey, and died within a short distance of the place where they met the stranger twelve months before. We say nothing about the probability or improbability of this affair. We give the account as we found it, adding that the story in Bramwell's life contains fuller details than the one given by Atmore. In consequence of the death of Mr. Burbeck, his appointment became void; and, although his name is down in the printed minutes for Blackburn, his place had to be supplied.

About the time when this event occurred, the Rev. William Bramwell had just commenced his ministry. Being wishful for family reasons to be near Preston, application was made to Mr. Wesley that he should be sent to Blackburn to supply the place of Mr. Burbeck. At first Mr. Wesley refused to comply with this request; but, at the earnest wish of the Blackburn people, he at length consented to the arrangement. Mr. Bramwell entered upon his labours with great zeal and earnestness, and his preaching was in some measure characterised by that unction and power for which it was afterwards so eminently distinguished. Great success attended his labours during the two years he was in this circuit. He had to endure considerable persecution in carrying on his work. In going to several of his appointments he had to pass a tanyard, in Nova Scotia, where several savage dogs were kept; these were sometimes set at liberty by their owner and urged to attack the preacher, which they did and bit him most severely. To defend himself he procured a stick with a sharp iron point, which stick

he preserved in after life as a memorial of the good service which it had rendered him.

Methodism in Blackburn, in 1788, had got upon a firm basis, and gained a position of considerable influence in the town. With a good new chapel, and useful and popular ministers on the ground, besides being just created the head of a circuit, and with a membership of about eight hundred persons, including such places as Preston, Chorley, Bacup, and Haslingden, it had every prospect of success.

The society at this time included some most active and devoted men, one of which was Mr. William Banning, who has been already spoken of. Another was a Mr. George Walkden, a useful leader and a popular local preacher. Mr. Walkden possessed a tall, manly figure, and a rich, musical voice, which, added to his superior abilities, and stirring graphic illustrations and earnest appeals, these combined to make him both popular and useful. It is said that he scarcely ever preached but souls were saved. Some of his pulpit appeals were most overpowering. He laboured hard, and travelled much, and suffered great persecution. He often walked from Blackburn to Colne, a distance of 18 miles, and, after preaching three times, walked back again the same night. It was not an uncommon practice with him to throw off his coat in the pulpit when he got unusually warm in his subject. We have failed to gain any further particulars of this excellent man, and, after considerable efforts, we have not been able to ascertain when he died, or where he was buried. We regret this much, because memorials of a life so full of incident, and so closely identified with the origin of Methodism in many of the towns and villages in this part

of Lancashire, could not have failed to prove most interesting.

Another prominent and useful member of the society at that time was N. Aspden, Esq., surgeon, an account of whose life was given in the Methodist Magazine for 1799. His remains lie interred in the front of Clayton Street chapel, and his gravestone bears the following inscription :—

"In memory of Nathaniel Aspden, surgeon, who departed this life, September 24th, 1798, aged 32 years."

His God sustained him in his final hour,
His final hour brought glory to his God.

A celebrated young woman named Ann Cutler, was converted and led to join the society in what was then a part of the Blackburn circuit. This was brought about through the instrumentality of the Rev. W. Bramwell. After her conversion she displayed great zeal for the salvation of souls, and gave herself up to a course of labours which resulted in most extensive usefulness. She travelled over a great part of Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire for the purpose of holding revival services. During the prosecution of her mission, Blackburn, Hoghton, Mellor, and other societies in this circuit were often favoured with her labours. Her eminent holiness, her burning zeal, her yearning compassion for souls, her remarkable power of persuasion, together with her all-prevailing influence in prayer, rendered her course of labour one of marvellous success. Mr. Bramwell, who was no mean authority on the subject, said—"For power in prayer I never expect to see her equal." She died on one of her revival missions at Macclesfield in 1794.

The period of history just passing before us, is about the end of the last century. Things had gone on pretty

much the same as in other places, with alternations of prosperity and retrogression. The former, on the whole, must have predominated, inasmuch as we find the membership to have progressively increased from 878, the first return in 1788, to 1180 in 1794. In 1795 took place the first great division in the Connexion, occasioned by the expulsion of the Rev. Alexander Kilham, which secession took the name by which it is at present called, viz., *The Methodist New Connexion.* In this struggle the Blackburn circuit suffered considerably, as we may well suppose, for we find an immediate and serious loss of members, the returns being, 1794, 1,180; 1795, 993; 1796, 870. Into the nature and cause of that sharp conflict it is not our intention to enter. Seventy-five years have buried the antipathies as well as the bones of those who waged war in that fierce battle. It was the first great fight in which the Connexion received its "baptism of fire," to be followed in after years by two others still more fiery and severe. The original building erected by the Kilhamite seceders as their first place of worship in this town is still in existence. It stands in a yard at the back of the theatre, in Ainsworth street, and is at present used for some business purpose.

We will next give a statistical summary of the number of members in society in every place in the circuit in the early part of the present century, with the names of the leaders of the various societies in 1809.

Blackburn had 195 Members. The leaders' names were—

N. Aspden, Alice Leaver, John Howarth, John Edge, Joseph Crewe, John Bruce, John Ward, James Mellor, Wm. Coulthurst, Benjamin Leaver, and Wm. Williams.

Lower Darwen. We believe the numbers in this village were included in the Blackburn return. Giles Howarth was the leader.

Over Darwen had 70 Members. Leaders: William Greenwood, James Whittaker, John Entwisle, James Smith, and Burgoin Fish.

Mellor had 98 Members. Leaders: John Cook, Richard Barnes, William Holesworth, Thomas Cronshaw, Thomas Ainsworth, and Thomas Cook.

Hoghton had 96 Members. Leaders: John Crossley (our friend of the five wives), Jane Brierley, Ralph Pearson' John Banning, Robert Pearson, John Haslam, and William Cook.

Tockholes had 16 Members. Leader: Benjamin Nightingale.

Bankfoot had 6 Members. Leader: John Welch.

Rishton had 6 Members. Leader: William Smith.

Great Harwood had 12 Members. Leader: N. Aspden.

Stanhill had 28 Members. Leader: James Aspden.

The foregoing returns will show the numerical state of the circuit sixty years ago. In the book from whence these figures have been taken there are carefully preserved records of the names of all the members in the circuit, their social position, whether married or single, and the names of the leaders with whom they met.

In the year 1815, the Methodists of Blackburn felt their need of a larger place of worship, and steps were taken to secure one on the site of the then existing chapel. The area was greatly extended, and some portions of the walls of the old building were worked into the new one. So few, however, of the old materials were used that the chapel may be

considered to have been a new erection. This edifice was completed and opened in 1816, as is intimated on the stone in the front of the building. The opening sermons were preached by the Rev. R. Reece and the Rev. G. Storry. The total sum realised at the opening services was £71. This amount in the present day would be looked upon as contemptible, and even for the Methodists of fifty-five years ago it was nothing marvellous. But we must bear in mind that at that time England had just finished an expensive war; trade was bad, money was scarce, and provisions dear, so that, perhaps, the sum was liberal considering the times. It was a good substantial and commodious place of worship, and large, considering that the population amounted to only about 18,000 people. In keeping with the practice of that day an incubus of debt was left upon it. Our fathers built their chapels in faith, and left their posterity to pay for them by good works. Clayton-street was no exception. The debt left was considerable, and at one time reached as high as £2,400. It has been handed forward from one generation to another, who have bravely and patiently borne the responsibility. The present debt upon the entire property is about £900, but the trustees are not without hope of witnessing before long its utter extinction. In addition to the opening services, private subscriptions were also raised. It will probably be interesting to know the names of some of the principal subscribers :—Mr. Thos. Brown, £20 ; Mr. John Edge, £20 ; Mr. Jas. Pickup, £15 ; Over Darwen Society, £12. The following gave £10 each :—Mr. John Fish, Mr. Jas. Shorrock, Mr. Joseph Crewe, Mr. Thos. Wilkinson, Mr. J. W. Dall, Mr. John Newsham, Mr. John Illingworth, Mr. J. T. Briggs,

Mr. W. King, Mr. Wm. Bradley, Mr. Geo. Illingworth, Mr. John Kenyon, Mr. Wm. Boys, Mr. John Brigg, Mr. Wm. Coulthurst, and Mr. R. Edleston. We have not room to give the names of all the subscribers, but will add a few more :—John Newsham, Thos. Wilkinson, John Illingworth, William Williams, Mrs. Fletcher, John Mellor, Ezra Duxbury, Wm. Carus, Percey Crewe, S. Moore, D. Dewhurst, H. Wilkinson, John Gee, Mr. Bell, Jane Coulthurst, Newill and Walker, Robt. Holden, and Wm. Waddington. These all gave £5 each. In this list some familiar names will be recognised by the older members of the Clayton-street congregation. The chapel has, since its erection, undergone several internal alterations, one especially under the supervision of the Rev. Benjamin Frankland, the cost of which was defrayed by the late Miss Newsham. Clayton Street Chapel is, no doubt, a dear and hallowed place to many. In childhood and youth, and onwards to riper years, and in some cases even in old age, they have worshipped within its walls, and have many precious memories associated with its history and people.

Many well remembered individuals who have been connected with the Clayton-street society during the half-century, both males and females, might be enumerated, and their excellencies described, but this we decline to do lest we should fall into the evil of making invidious distinctions. There was, however, one remarkable man that we cannot well pass over, namely, a Mr. William Kay, better known in his day as "Bill Kay, of Blackburn." This man's conversion was a remarkable display of the power of saving grace. Up to the age of thirty-eight he was a degraded drunkard, a vile blasphemer, and, in addition, a noted prize fighter. In

preparing himself for his brutal conflicts it was customary for him for some time to live on raw flesh to make him more savage for the fray. So far did he carry his daring wickedness that one day in a great rage he dared the Almighty to do his worst to him. This terrible fellow, the dread of the town, one night strolled into a Methodist prayer meeting, held in a private house, and whilst listening to a few words of exhortation addressed to the company by a good old christian named Lawrence Kenyon, he was convinced of sin and arrested in his mad career. After deep and long repentance he was pardoned, and made happy in God. He became a most consistent christian and a zealous member and leader in Clayton-street society for many years. His zeal was sometimes manifested in eccentric forms, and many strange stories are told of his odd sayings and doings, but in all he sought to glorify God. For fuller particulars of his character and life we refer all who are anxious to know more about him to the memoirs of the Rev. Thos. O'Keysall, who, when stationed in the Blackburn circuit, was one of Kay's intimate associates.

It may prove interesting to know who were the leaders in the Blackburn society in 1828. The following are their names:—James Mellor, George Haworth, William Williams, John Gwilt, J. Butcher, T. Aspinall, H. Lonsdale, William Talbot, W. Kay, H. Gardener, John Duckworth, James MacConell, J. Ashton, J. Illingworth, J. Talbot, W. Catterall, J. Parker, W. Butterfield, W. Cook, W. Duckworth.

The following is a copy of the names and places of a Circuit Plan for 1832, the earliest we have been able to catch a sight of. It is headed, "Lord's Day Plan of the

Travelling and Local Preachers in the Blackburn Circuit, 1832." The following are the places as they stand in order on the plan:—Blackburn, Daisey Field, Hoghton, Mellor, Darwen, New Row, Harwood, Oakenshaw, Stanhill, St. James's Row, Pall Mall, Newfield, Mile End, Billington, Belthorn. The following are the names of the preachers as they stand in order:—E. Sumner and H. Hickman (circuit ministers), J. Walsh, W. Hallsworth, J. Illingworth, G. Howarth, Giles Haworth, J. Swain, H. Baron, J. Rhodes, J. Clayton, T. Pearson, J. Talbot, J. Wear, R. Stephenson, A. Birtwell, J. Ward, G. C. Talbot, H. Holding, T. Fielding, J. Sedgwick, J. Smith, J. Hartley. On trial: J. Law, J. Duckworth. Supernumeraries: W. Banning, W. Williams, and J. Hirst. The only survivor of this list is Mr. A. Birtwell, of Oakenshaw.

In 1839, the Blackburn Circuit took its part in celebrating the centenary of Methodism by holding a large central tea meeting in the school-room in the chapel yard, at which nearly one thousand persons were present. After tea the meeting was held in the chapel, which was filled to overflowing, when addresses were delivered by the Rev. T. Armson, Rev. W. Exley, and Messrs. J. Illingworth. J. Newsham, G. Openshaw, M. Holden, S. Littlewood, R. Holt, J. Sedgwick, G. Howarth, W. Smith, T. Pearson, and W. Makinson. The following were amongst the principal subscribers:—Mr. Bradley and family, £10 10s., Mr. Butcher, £5; Mr. J. W. Dall, £10; Mr. Charles Dall, £5; Mr. and Mrs. Foulds, £5; Mr. H. Lonsdale and family. £10 10s.; Mr. J. Mercer, £10; Mr. Newsham, £52 10s.; Mrs. Newsham, £21; Miss Newsham, £21; Master J. N.

Briggs, £10 10s., Mr. Openshaw and family, £10 10s.; Mr. Smallpage and family, £5 5s.

Although the Blackburn circuit has not had the honour of sending many men into the ministry, it has not been altogether void of that honour. The following are the names of those who have been either sent out by this circuit, or have been intimately connected with it, or natives of it:—

William Howarth,	entered the ministry,	1794—died 1842.
Wm. Illingworth,	do.	1829.
Robt. Dugdale,	do.	1832.
B. N. Haworth,	do.	1842.
Robt. Haworth,	do.	1842.
T. B. Butcher,	do.	1847.
James Clegg,	do.	1869.

Not one of the least interesting topics of Methodist history in Blackburn is its Sabbath school institution. Its early origin invests it with additional interest. It dates its commencement at a period long before all other similar institutions in the town existed. It was established about 1787, only seven years after Raikes begun the first Sabbath school in the city of Gloucester. In the course of Mr. Wesley's wanderings he met with some of these schools in various places just undergoing their formation, and expressed his strong approval of them. When we consider whereunto these schools have grown, the immense good which they have effected, the multitudes of souls which have been saved through their instrumentality, we may smile when we read Mr. Wesley's words:—"I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these

schools may become nurseries for Christians?" Mr. Wesley, with all his foresight, little dreamed of the vast extent to which they would spread. He saw their dawn; we see their meridian day. Some of the "Rules and Regulations" of those early schools were very unlike those of the present day. There were upper masters, under masters, and assistant masters for teachers. The first were paid half a crown a Sabbath, the next two shillings, and the third one shilling. The school hours used to be from eight in the morning until six in the evening, from April to October, and from nine to four during the winter months, with intervals for meals. In April, 1788, Mr. Wesley was at Bolton, and witnessed a spectacle which astonished and delighted him. He writes as follows:—"Sat. 19.—We went on to Bolton, where I preached in the evening in one of the most elegant houses in the kingdom, and to one of the liveliest congregations. And this I must avow, there is not such a set of singers in any of the Methodist congregations in the three kingdoms. There cannot be; for we have near a hundred such trebles, boys and girls, selected out of our Sunday schools, and accurately taught, as are not found together in any chapel, cathedral, or music-room within the four seas. Besides, the spirit with which they all sing, and the beauty of many of them, so suits the melody, that I defy any to exceed it; except the singing of angels in our Father's house. ——Sun. 20.—At eight, and at one, the house was thoroughly filled. About three I met between nine hundred and a thousand of the children belonging to our Sunday schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean, as well as plain, in their apparel. All were serious and

well-behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as, I believe, England or Europe can afford. When they all sung together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre; and, what is the best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in His salvation. These are a pattern to all the town. Their usual diversion is to visit the poor that are sick (sometimes six, or eight, or ten together), to exhort, comfort, and pray with them. Frequently ten or more of them get together to sing and pray by themselves; sometimes thirty or forty; and are so earnesly engaged, alternately singing, praying, and crying, that they know not how to part. You children that hear this, why should not you go and do likewise. Is not God here as well as at Bolton? Let God arise and maintain His own cause, even 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings!'"

On the day following this scene he came to Blackburn, where he would probably make this entry in his journal, and deliver the substance of the same to the newly-formed school at Clayton-street. We infer as much from the appeal which he makes in the closing part of the address, viz., "You children that hear this, why should not you go and do likewise? Is not God here as well as at Bolton?"

From that time to the present Methodism has not been unrepresented in this great field of Christian labour. Some of the best of men and women have been found amongst its workers. The Sabbath school in Blackburn has felt the effects of those convulsions which from time to time have shaken the Connexion, and more than once it has been nigh unto extinction. After passing through many trying scenes

the old school of 1787 is still in vigorous operation. It is impossible to think of the vast number of children which, during a great part of one hundred years, have been taught in this school, without being affected by the consideration. Multitudes of these will be found in heaven, who with departed teachers, both of ancient and modern times, will rejoice over the recollections and labours connected with the old Clayton-street Sunday School. This school has in its day experienced various changes and migrations. It began its career in the bottom of the first chapel in Clayton-street. It was subsequently held in the Assembly Room, in Heaton-street, and also in the Music Hall, in Market Street-lane. Sometime about 1819, a scheme was carried out of building a commodious school-room, a minister's house, and other dwellings in Cleaver-street. The house was occupied for one year by the Rev. Cuthbert Whiteside, but was afterwards discontinued. The school-rooms were large; the boys occupied the lower, and the girls the upper room. In 1825 a branch school was formed, and a School-chapel was erected at Daisey Field. At this time the Methodist Sunday school interest was at its height, numbering as it did about nine hundred scholars. The following are the names of the officers and active men of that day (1828):—*Superintendents:* James Mellor and Richard Yates. *Treasurer:* John Mellor. *Secretaries:* Robert Moore, Hugh Stuart, and George Wain, *Committee:* G. Howarth, J. Burrow, Thomas Moore, William Dawson, John Pickup, John Whitehead, Joseph Crossley, Thomas Fielding. *Visitors:* George Howarth, William Duckworth, Joseph Crossley, William Dawson, W. Makinson, John Mellor, T. Moore, Thomas Fielding. Among other

officers we find the following names besides those above, viz.: James Butcher, George Tipping, Thomas Law, Richard Boys, Joseph King, John Pickup, George Wain, John Sedgwick, John Whitehead, all of which have gone to their final bourne. Financial difficulties and other circumstances compelled the school authorities to dispose of both these properties. On their removal thence in 1837 the large school-room, now occupied as a cabinet maker's shop, in the chapel yard, was erected for their reception, where they continued until 1861, when they found rest in the St. Peter's-street Day and Sunday School premises, where they are at present carried on.

We must now bring these sketches to a close. Whilst giving them one thing must have been manifest to all, and that is the fragmentary character of the information we have endeavoured to supply. This has arisen from the paucity of materials out of which to construct a complete and continuous history. Of Methodist traditions there are scarcely any to be found. Very few incidents have floated down the stream of time earlier than the present century, and were it not for the few passages recorded in Mr. Wesley's journal, and the items gathered from the life of Mr. Banning, the past of Blackburn early Methodism would be almost totally unknown. There is no doubt but that many interesting facts have been permitted to perish for the want of proper care and attention in preserving them. We have sought with diligence to find an old circuit plan from whence to gather a little light, but have not succeeded. We have knocked at the doors of elderly people's memories to gain some information, but they have either refused to open, or, when they have opened, they have proved to have little or nothing

in them bearing upon the subject. So that in drawing out these sketches we have felt the limited supply of facts, and incidents, and biographical memoranda to constitute our greatest difficulty. We greatly regret the obscurity which rests upon the introduction of Methodism into Blackburn, and the names of the good men and women who were its first members. Until a recent period documents containing some interesting items relative to that subject were in existence, but, as in many other cases, they have been mislaid or lost. Notwithstanding these drawbacks we have endeavoured to group together as many particulars as we have been able to obtain. What we have given we trust will not prove uninteresting, but will stimulate others to seek for more, remembering what has been said, that a people who take no pleasure in the achievements of their ancestors will never accomplish anything worthy of being remembered by their descendants. As far as Blackburn is concerned the absence of traditionary information may in a great measure be accounted for on several grounds. One is the death of all living links which could possibly connect the present with the early days of the Connexion. Very few are to be found who can tell us what their Methodist fathers told them about Methodism in their days, and none are now alive who in this town saw the face or heard the voice of its great founder, J. Wesley. Another ground is the almost entirely altered character of the congregation. Scarcely any of the present hearers, or members of society, are the descendants of the original Blackburn Methodists. Nearly the whole of them are what are called "new comers," that is to say, have entered the town within the present generation. Then again the

lapse of time, the work of death, the enormous increase of population, the vast extension of the trade and commerce of the town, together with the great influx of strangers, these things have all tended more or less to produce the state of things alluded to.

The position of connexional Methodism in Blackburn is much inferior to almost every other town in Lancashire of the same size and population. With eighty thousand inhabitants and only one moderate sized chapel, and that above half a century old, this fact does not reflect creditably on the aggressive and progressive spirit of its adherents. In making this statement we would not overlook the existence of other forms of Methodist organization in the town, for whose success in the spreading of divine truth, and the salvation of souls, we have nothing but the best of wishes. In the remarks just made we refer more particularly to the Clayton-street society, or what it is sometimes designated, the mother church of Methodism in Blackburn. When we speak of there being but one chapel in the town we would not forget the small places of worship at Brookhouse and the Ragged School, as well as the recently-erected School-chapels at Harwood-street and Witton. The two latter, however, are for the accommodation of the suburbs, whilst the dense population of the town is inadequately supplied. It was a most regretable necessity which obliged the Methodists of nearly forty years ago to sell the spacious School-chapel at Daiseyfield. Since that time a vast population has gathered round the place, and a fine centre for aggressive action has been lost to Methodism. When we have passed through that densely populated neighbourhood, and looked upon the character of its

inhabitants, we have felt humiliated as we thought of the fact that there a Methodist chapel and a flourishing Sabbath school once existed, but have both passed away into other hands. A finer field for evangelical effort, and one in which Methodism would find a more suitable adaptation, we have never met with. We have been ready to ask the question, can nothing be done to re-occupy the old ground, and by some means get back the chapel, and employ it in carrying on those services for which it was originally built?

Clayton Street Methodism, as it is found at present, is stunted and dwarfed for want of the means of expansion. All the sittings of the chapel are let, and numbers of hearers are continually lost to the congregation for want of accommodation. If a revival were happily to take place, including an accession to the society of some fifty or a hundred converts—and is such an event impossible?—where could they find seats to occupy? When a Methodist family removes to Blackburn, which is not unfrequently the case, the utmost difficulty is experienced in finding room for them, and that is often done by scattering the members of the family over several parts of the chapel. What is wanted is the erection of a chapel on the north side of the town, and the creation of another centre of Methodism in Blackburn. A scheme involving this has for some time been in contemplation, but the depressed state of trade, and other things, have hitherto prevented it being carried out. But now that commercial prosperity has once more returned to the district, it is hoped that practical steps will be taken to accomplish this project, and that all other schemes will be made subordinate to it. Following the completion of this enterprise, would probably

be a division of the circuit, which is greatly needed, the additional chapel to form the head of the new circuit.

In estimating the position of original Methodism in this town it would be most unfair, as well as most unjust, not to take into consideration the terrible convulsions which have from time to time shaken it to its very foundations, and resulted in the loss of many members. The Kilhamite division of 1795, as we have already shown, involved the loss of considerable numbers. The agitation of 1835, caused by the explusion of Dr. Warren, occasioned great havoc in the Clayton-street society, congregation, and Sunday school. To such an extent did the havoc spread that the school was almost entirely broken up, the plan lost twenty local preachers, and the congregation, which was previously large and respectable, was reduced for a while to a mere skeleton. Dr. Warren found many sympathisers in this circuit, where, it is said, he delivered his first public addresses after his expulsion. Then followed the unhappy disturbances of 1849, commonly called the "Reform Movement," which, although not on so large a scale as the one just named, it, nevertheless, made a serious breach in the old body in this town.

When we consider the fiery trials and hot campaigns through which Clayton-street Methodism has had to pass, trials in which it has been crushed and broken, we need not be surprised that it should feel the effects of those struggles to this day. The greater marvel is that it exists at all. We have seen a noble vessel overtaken by a furious gale and tossed about amid the wild waste of waters. At one time she is completely covered with the waves, then again we see her coming up from the troubled depths strained and shaken

by the tempest, but recovering her steadiness and resuming her voyage. We have seen the forest oak tremble and bend beneath the pressure of a mighty storm, its branches broken, and itself apparently nigh unto being uprooted. But we have seen that oak on the subsidence of the tempest proudly rear itself again into its dignified position. In these we see the types of Methodism when passing through its epochs of disaster and trouble. The three great crisises which we have just named not only produced the most damaging effects at the time they occurred, but also created in their turn rival sections of Methodism upon the same ground, all which continue unto this day.

Besides these, there is another form of Methodism in the town in active operation; we allude to the Primitive Methodists, who are doing a good work in the Lord's vineyard. Now, these are all competitors in the spread of the same doctrines, and are all striving to promote almost the same organization. So that with the damages of the past, and the strong competition at the present, if the body of the original Methodists in Blackburn is not equal to what it is in other towns in Lancashire, it is not without a cause. We have not the least desire to recall the painful scenes and angry controversies which attended the secessions we have alluded to, nor are we at this day disposed to discuss the principles involved in those struggles. Most of the individuals who took an active and leading part on both sides are now in their graves, and we wish to place the prejudices and differences which actuated them in the same region where their bones are found. When we have passed the chapels of the Free Church Methodists, the New Connexion Methodists, and

the Primitive Methodists, as well as the Clayton-street Methodists, we have thought what a pity it is that the people who worship in those various sanctuaries cannot become one. Sectional divisions may be good and necessary where denominational differences are great, or where religious doctrines and principles are utterly dissimilar. But how comparatively thin is the partition which keep the various sections of Methodism asunder.

Whatever others may think and say we cannot divest our minds of one conviction, and that is, that one undivided Methodism in a town or kingdom is greatly to be preferred to fractured forms of the same great system. If hereditary prejudices on all sides were to cease, and unity and love were to predominate in and over all Methodist hearts, how easily and how soon the unification of Methodism would be accomplished. "A consummation devoutly to be wished," says one man. "Perfectly Utopian and utterly impracticable," says another. "Far better to retain their separate organizations and provoke each other to love and good works," says a third. "The Millenium must arrive before this can come to pass," is the opinion of others. Well, such may be the opinions of many, but many much more difficult and more unlikely things than this have been recently and marvellously accomplished. The great battle of truth and error has yet to be fought, and truth will call for the united forces of its armies, and if the divided churches refuse to close up their ranks, God may see fit to use the sword to punish, or the lash to whip His people into union. Until the time shall arrive when unity shall make us one, the various Methodist churches must go on fighting, and, whether in the battlefield

or on the march, let each section throw a shout, not of defiance, but of friendly recognition, and let all join to sing that grand old Methodist war song, which calls all its people to the fight, beginning—

> Soldiers of Christ, arise,
> And put your armour on, &c.

In bringing this brief history to a close, we would observe that all future prosperity amongst ourselves, as well as amongst all other christian churches, depends upon the spiritual life and power of its members. A beautiful sanctuary, an eloquent and learned ministry, a well organised system of church government, these may exist; but if the elements of divine power in the hearts and lives of individual members are wanting, there can be no permanent success. Let each and every Methodist in Blackburn so live as to "achieve a good degree amongst his brethren," and obtain a "good report from them that are without." Let us bear in mind that consistency is strength, and purity is power; and let us all try by the silent eloquence of a holy life to recommend our religion, and to preach Christ in the various localities and families in which we dwell. When the church of Christ becomes attractive by the beauties of holiness seen in her members, the masses will be drawn towards her as by magnetic sway. The want of success amongst us is more the result of spiritual feebleness within than any hostility or hindrance without. Let us all, collectively and individually, consecrate ourselves afresh to God, and so labour and live in faith, unity, and earnestness, that those who may come after us may neither be ashamed of our works nor our names. And, finally, let us cultivate

towards all other christian churches a kind and catholic spirit, and take as our motto that which was adopted by our fathers in the gospel, viz. :—

"THE FRIENDS OF ALL, THE ENEMIES OF NONE."

THE NAMES OF THOSE MINISTERS WHO HAVE LABOURED ON THE GROUND COMPRISED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF WHAT IS NOW CALLED THE BLACKBURN CIRCUIT.

WHEN IN THE HAWORTH CIRCUIT.

1753, J. Maskew, J. Whitford, E. Williams, J. Jones, W. Shent, and J. Edwards.
1755, Wm. Grimshaw, John Nelson, John Schofield.
1758, Jas. Oddie, Alexr. Coates.
1765, J. Brown, J. Atley, N. Manners, J. Stephens, R. Costerdine.
1766, J. Brown, J. Shaw, R. Costerdine, J. Atley.
1767, R. Costerdine, J. Guildford, J. Whittam, T. Cherry.
1768, T. Mitchell, J. Guildford, W. Ellis, T. Newall.
1769, T. Mitchell, G. Hudson, T. Wride, D. Evans.
1770, R. Seed, G. Hudson, D. Evans.
1771, J. Robertshaw, S. Procter, J. Poole.
1772, T. Johnson, John Poole, T. Tatton.
1773, T. Johnson, E. Slater, R. Costerdine.
1774, R. Costerdine, R. Seed, R. Swan.
1775, T. Taylor, R. Swan, Samuel Bardsley.

WHEN IN THE COLNE CIRCUIT.

1776, S. Bardsley, Wm. Brammah.
1777, A. Mather, R. Condy.
1778, A. Mather, T. Vasey.
1779, C. Hopper, W. Percival.
1780, C. Hopper, T. Longley.
1781, T. Hanson, T. Readshaw, P. Greenwood.
1782, T. Hanson, T. Johnson, D. Evans.
1783, J. Easton, R. Costerdine, T. Warwick.
1784, J. Easton, T. Dixon, C. Atmore.
1785, C. Atmore, E. Jackson, R. Haywood.
1786, E. Jackson, S. Bardsley, J. Ridall.

WHEN IN THE BLACKBURN CIRCUIT.

1787, F. Wrigley, E. Burbeck.
1788, G. Story, W. Bramwell.
1789, G. Story, G. Lowe.
1790, J. Thom, J. Nelson, 2nd.
1791, H. Taylor, J. Evans.
1792, J. Booth, W. Hainsworth, Isaac Muff.
1793, G. Snowden, J. Atkin, J. Furness, R. Hardacre.
1794, G. Snowden, C. Tunnicliffe, W. Pearson.
1795, Timothy Crowther, D. Barroclough.
1796, Timothy Crowther, J. Denton.
1797, H. Taylor, J. Leach.

1798, J. Leech, T. Wood.
1799, J. Crosby, Abraham Moseley.
1800, John Crosby, Abm. Moseley.
1801, Jonathan Crowther, Thomas Harrison.
1802, Jonathan Crowther, Thomas Harrison.
1803, John Smith, R. Dall.
1804, John Smith, Thomas Hutton.
1805, Timothy Crowther, Thomas Hutton.
1806, Timothy Crowther, James Townley.
1807, James Townley, W. Leech.
1808, Jonathan Parker, W. Leech.
1809, T. Bartholomew, John Fairbourne.
1810, T. Bartholomew, Matthew Lumb.
1811. M. Lumb, James Bridgnell.
1812, James Bridgnell, William Hainsworth.
1813, Isaac Muff, William Hainsworth.
1814, Joseph Drake, J. C. Leppington.
1815, John Ogilvie, J. C. Leppington.
1816, R. Miller, Joshua Marsden.
1817, R. Miller, Joshua Marsden.
1818, A. Floyd, Thomas H. Walker.
1819, John Fairbourne, T. H. Walker.
1820, Jno. Fairbourne, Mark Dawes.
1821, John Farrer, Cuthbert Whiteside.
1822, Wm. Bird, Richard Allen.
1823, Matthew Lumb, Joshua Fearnside.
1824, John Reynolds, Jun., Robert Crowther.
1825, John Reynolds, Jun., Robert Crowther.
1826, John Phillips, John Thompson.
1827, J. Phillips, Wilson Brailsford
1828, T. H. Walker, Wilson Brailsford.
1829, T. H. Walker, Wilson Brailsford
1830, Edward Sumner, Adam Fletcher.
1831, Edward Sumner, Henry Hickman.
1832, Thomas Slugg, Richard Rymer.
1833, Thomas Slugg, Richard Rymer.
1834, Hy. Ranson, R. S. Hardy.
1835, Henry Ranson, Thomas M. Fitzgerald.
1836, Luke Barlow, Charles Taylor.
1837, Luke Barlow, Wm. Baddiley.
1838, James Bumstead, Thomas O. Keysell.
1839, T. Armson, W. Exley.
1840, T. Armson, W. Exley.
1841, T. Armson. W. Exley.
1842, J. Raby, J. Haughton.
1843, S. Allen, E. Oldfield.
1844, S, Allen, E. Oldfield.
1845, J. Hannah, 2nd, Gervase Smith
1846, J. Hannah, R. Woodfin.
1847, J. Hannah, G. Scott, 2nd.
1848, B. Clayton, W. P. Slater.
1849, B. Clayton, F. W. Greeves.
1850, B. Clayton, F. W. Greeves.
1851, William Brailey, Wm. Lees.
1852, William Brailey, Wm. Lees.
1853, William Brailey, J. S. Workman, J. Osborne (super).
1854, Thomas Armson, Thomas Nattrass.
1855, T. Armson, T. Nattrass.
1856, Benjamin Frankland, Sen., J. Hooton.
1857, B. Frankland, Sen., J. Hooton (Over Darwen).
1858, B. Frankland, Sen., J. Hooton (Over Darwen), C. Crawshaw.
1859, R. Keyworth, J. Rhodes, 1st Over Darwen, C. Crawshaw
1860, R. Keyworth, J. Rhodes, C. Crawshaw.

1861, R. Keyworth, J. Rhodes, S. Sheard.
1862, W. Chambers, J. Smithies (Over Darwen), G. S. Tyler.
1863, W. Chambers, J. Smithies, G. S. Tyler.
1864, W. Chambers, J. Smithies, S. Merrill (Oakenshaw), C. W. L. Christien.
1865, W. Faulkner, S. Merrill, J. T. Sanger, C. W. L. Christien.
1866, W. Faulkner, J. T. Sanger, G. Penman, C. W. L. Christien.
1867, W. Faulkner, J. T. Sanger, G. Penman, W. Kendrew.
1868, J. Ward, G. Penman, R. Morton, S. Weaver.
1869, J. Ward, J. Officer, E. J. Smith, S. Weaver.
1870, J. Ward, J. Officer, E. J. Smith, S. Weaver.

A List of the Names of the Trustees of the Chapels in the Blackburn Circuit, with the dates of all the Deeds, past and present.

BLACKBURN.

First deed, 1785; Second, 1815; Third, 1842; Fourth, 1852; fifth, 1859. In 1852 the trust was placed upon the Model Deed. The following are the present trustees:—

Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
John Ratcliffe, Blackburn.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
Henry Knowles, Blackburn.
George Clarke, Rishton.
George Matthews, Brindle.
Thomas Harwood, Darwen.
James Carr, Blackburn.
William Shaw, Blackburn.
Thomas Rakestraw, Bacup.
John Thompson, draper, Blackburn.
Isaiah Cleminson, Blackburn.
William Horrocks, Blackburn.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
John Thompson, agent, Blackburn.
H. A. Grime, Blackburn.
Christopher Brooks, Blackburn.

BLACKBURN DAY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Model Deed, 1860.

William Horrocks, Blackburn.
Isaiah Cleminson, Blackburn.
John Thompson, draper, Blackburn.
Christopher Brooke, Blackburn.
H. A. Grime, Blackburn.
George Clarke, Rishton.
John Thompson, agent, Blackburn.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
William Shaw, Blackburn.
James Carr, Blackburn.

WITTON.—Model Deed, 1868.

Duke Bannister, Blackburn.
Richard Blackburn, Blackburn.
William Tattersall, Blackburn.
Mark Rushworth, Blackburn.
J. Thompson, agent, Blackburn.
William Carr, Blackburn.
William Shaw, Blackburn.
J. R. Fletcher, Blackburn.
John Charnley, Blackburn.
W. H. Barnes, Blackburn.
Thomas Pomfret, Blackburn.
William Stewart, Blackburn.
Eli Witton, Blackburn.
John Bannister, Blackburn.
Thomas Metcalf, Blackburn.

HARWOOD STREET.—Model Deed, 1865.

E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
H. Cramp, Blackburn.
John Varley, Blackburn.
James Varley, senr., Blackburn.
Richard Burrows, Blackburn.
Thomas Haworth, Blackburn.
Duke Bannister, Blackburn.
Giles Parkinson, Blackburn.
William Tattersall, Blackburn.
Robert Whittaker, Blackburn.
Christopher Parkinson, Blackburn.
Joseph Whalley, Blackburn.
Mark Rushworth, Blackburn.
John Charnley, Blackburn.

DARWEN OLD CHAPEL.

First Deed, 1791; Second, 1817; Third, 1839; Fourth, 1857.
None of these are upon the Model Deed.

Samuel Littlewood, Blackburn
John Ainsworth, Darwen.
E. Gregson, manufacturer, Darwen.
E. Gregson, druggist, Darwen.
R. Pearson, Darwen.
William Kaye, Darwen.
Thomas Crawshaw, Darwen.
Josiah Gregson, Darwen.
George Martin, Darwen.
Job Smith, Darwen.
Henry Ainsworth, Darwen.
William Livesey, Darwen.
John Thompson, Blackburn.
John Baldwin, Blackburn.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.

DARWEN NEW CHAPEL.—Model Deed, 1864.

David Ainsworth, Darwen.
Josiah Gregson, Darwen.
William Kaye, Darwen.
George Martin, Darwen.
John Ainsworth, Darwen.
Henry Ainsworth, Darwen.
John Rawlinson, Darwen.
William Isherwood, Darwen.
Barraclough Nutter, Darwen.
George Tomlinson, Darwen.
W. H. Gregson, Darwen.
Edward Gregson, Darwen.
William Livesey, Lower Darwen.
Thomas Crawshaw, Woodfold, Bury.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
J. Thompson, draper, Blackburn.
Ainsworth Booth, Blackburn.
George Clarke, Rishton.

NEW ROW.—Old Deed lost; Present Model Deed, 1860.

James Foulds, New Row
Roger Lacey, New Row.
Thomas Lacey, New Row.
John Cowell, New Row.
John Neville, New Row.
John Greaves, Blackburn
William Livesey, Blackburn.
Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
John Thompson, draper, Blackburn.
Robert Bannister, Blackburn.
Edward Gregson, manufacturer, Darwen.
William Kaye, Darwen.
Edward Gregson, druggist, Darwen.
Thomas Holding, Darwen.
Henry Ainsworth, Darwen.

HOGHTON.

First Deed, 1807; (1851,) 1854, Court of Chancery Order; 1870, Chancery Order, and put upon the Model Deed. On the renewal of the Deed, in 1851, a trial arose out of a misapplication of what was called Peto's Act, which resulted in the setting aside of the Deed of that date, and the falling of the power of renewal of trust into the hands of the Charity Commissioners.—See a special report of this case in the "Law Times," for August 5th, 1854, and the special notices in the Annual Chapel Report. The first Deed bears date 1807, but the chapel is supposed to have been erected in 1794, and not conveyed until 1807.

E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn
Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
Henry Knowles, Blackburn.
William Brown, Hoghton.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
L. Hacking, Blackburn.
William Barlow, Blackburn.
Giles Parkinson, Blackburn.
James Varley, jun., Blackburn
Thomas Pomfret, Blackburn.
Henry Cramp, Blackburn.
Mark Rushworth, Blackburn.
Ezra Duxbury, Blackburn.
William Stuart, Blackburn.
James Ashworth, Hoghton.

MELLOR.—First Deed, 1802; put upon the Model Deed, 1848.

Thomas Cooke, first part, Liverpool.
Richard Barnes, first part, Blackburn.
Samuel Littlewood, Blackburn.
Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
William Hirst, Blackburn.
L. Hacking, Blackburn
Anthony Charnley, Blackburn.
Henry Knowles, Blackburn.
John Metcalf, Blackburn.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
James Carr, Blackburn.
Robert Holt, Blackburn.
Thomas Mitton, Blackburn.

RISHTON.—Model Deed, 1862.

George Clarke, Rishton.
Joseph Clarke Rishton.
Joseph Noble, Rishton.
Thomas Grimshaw, Rishton.
James Bowker, Rishton.
Samuel Jones, Rishton.
Abraham Birtwell, Oakenshaw.
William Hindle, Blackburn.
William Horrocks Blackburn.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
Isaiah Cleminson, Blackburn.
J. S. Barton, Blackburn.
William Kay, Darwen.

GREAT HARWOOD.—Model Deed, 1854.

Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
Anthony Charnley, Blackburn.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
John Newton, Blackburn.
Ezra Duxbury, Blackburn.
Lawrence Hacking, Blackburn.
John Thompson, agent, Blackburn.
Henry Knowles, Blackburn.
George Ainsworth, Blackburn.
William Hargreaves, Harwood.
John Clayton, Harwood.
George Clarke, Rishton.
Abraham Birtwell, Enfield.

MELLOR BROOK.—Model Deed, 1852.

Joseph Dall, Balderstone.
James Dall, Samlesbury.
Richard Slater, Preston.
Thomas Rakestraw, Balderstone.
E. B. Shorrock, Blackburn.
Thomas Charnley, Blackburn.
E. Gregson, manufacturer, Darwen.
Josiah Gregson, ditto, Darwen.
Samuel Littlewood, Blackburn.
Anthony Charnley, Blackburn.
Ezra Duxbury, Blackburn.
John Newton, Blackburn.

OAKENSHAW, 1838.

James Butcher, Accrington.
Hartley Darcy, Accrington.
Henry Gill, Accrington.
John E. Lightfoot, Accrington.
William Hutchinson, Accrington.
William Lang, Accrington.
James Swain, Harwood.
John Clayton, Harwood.
Mark Johnson, Oakenshaw.
Abraham Birtwell, Oakenshaw.
John Baldwin, Oakenshaw.
William Fielding, Oakenshaw.
William Bates, Oakenshaw.
John Birtwell, Oakenshaw.
John Mercer, Oakenshaw.

B. T. BARTON, PRINTER, STATION ROAD, BLACKBURN